

# The Gates of Hell

**Grimoire of Cosmic Entities Volume One**

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**Chapter Six:  
The Dark Ministry**

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The following is an excerpt from the Diary of Drenicus the Wise when he peered through a mirror of the realities during the Age of Greatness.

Delving into Malsheem was a feat beyond compare. The sights I beheld! I saw the insides of the great fortress. Halls as wide as lakes, obelisks as tall as mountains. This and more gorged the space within the Palace of the Serpent. Made from great, black metal and stone, the obelisks, pillars, and arches were like huge bones lined with red veins. I am convinced that the veins pulsed slowly, as if some great heart were forcing blood through a tremendous body. Only the eyes of my witless guide allowed me to see in the darkness of the cyclopean halls. Only its diabolical body, immune to the cruelest heat, allowed me to withstand the fires that danced around me in my keep. Yet, my eyes could not withstand the assault on my mind as I saw things no mortal was meant to see. Souls in their purest state, shrieking like impotent ghosts as they were rent and warped by infernal machines and tools. Devas chained not by physical restraints, but by their own minds and desires. To see legion upon legion of pit fiends of the greatest size devouring nupperibo only to vomit them back into existence as lemons. Only the spells I cast before hand have kept me sane.

My guide did not flinch at any of this. The pit fiend I accompanied marched heedless of the spectacle as he entered a room larger than many towns. A circular dome, its ceiling roaring flames and its floors forged from some kind of black and red metal, held nine tremendous thrones of the deepest ebony at the center. All but one throne was occupied by a pit fiend of singular appearance. All were bloated on their own accomplishments and self-worth; I could feel their mutual animosity. More importantly, however, I could feel their mutual commitment to the cause for which they were formed.

Each turned to witness the entry of my coach, glaring at it with insufferable arrogance. Then, as my guide took his place before them, the pit fiends all rose as one and turned to center of the room. I hadn't noticed it before and I don't know how that occurred for there, in the center of the room, was a pit of darkness. Utterly empty was this pit. And yet, something throbbed therein. Unreasoning fear struck me and I swiftly closed my mind's eye and temporarily abandoned my observation. There was still more time and I had seen what I hoped to see this day: The Dark Ministry, the generals of the Legions of Hell, supreme strategists and tacticians of the Blood War, gathered in an unholy meeting.

## **The Blood War and Devils**

Although most of this treatise has and will continue to deal with the threat devils pose to the entirety of Creation, it is important to never forget that a significant portion of the diabolical is consumed with one of the greatest conflicts in the Cosmos: the *Blood War*. Having raged since the Dawn of the Gods, the *Blood War* is an often forgotten aspect of Hell and the Depths Below. Simply put, most mortals have no idea of what is at stake in the *Blood War*. To most mortals, the importance of the *Blood War* is transparent. After all, most mortals have never imagined, much less seen, the tremendous skirmishes, battles, and destruction wrought by the *War*. What most mortals assume of devils is that they are dedicated to corrupting the Mortal Coil and that is the extent of diabolical interests. And, this is true. The *Blood War* is the manifestation of this desire, although many fail to realize this.

The origins of the *Blood War* are unclear. There are many rumors and the following are the most popular. Some suggest that, during the Dawn of the Gods, devils and demons met in The Gray Wastes and – due to some kind of instinctual “racial hatred” – immediately sought to destroy each other. From a few skirmishes and small conflicts, this racial hatred escalated into full-scale battles until a never ending war consumed the Depths Below. Another theory suggests that the daemons, the mysterious fiends of The Gray Wastes, sought to test the definition of Evil.

Through manipulation, lies, and intrigue, the daemons tricked the devils and demons – who already had no love lost between them – into battles that eventually exploded into permanent war. As the paragons of organized, logical evil and chaotic, passionate evil sought to obliterate each other, daemons took advantage of both sides, simultaneously observing and reaping great spiritual benefits from the calamity. Still other theories suggest that the *Blood War* was started not by the denizens of the Depths Below, but by the various angels of the Realms Above. Having long since recognized that the forces of Evil far outnumber those of Righteousness, the Sarim (the collective of the Defenders of Freedom of Arborea, the Heralds of Holiness of Elysium, and the Seven Virtues of Heaven) somehow instigated this perpetual conflict, believing that such a contest would forever keep the forces of Evil from uniting.

It is likely that in some ways each of these theories has a grain of truth. After all, the daemons have and continue to benefit from the *Blood War*. And the *War* does ensure that no unity will ever come to pass with devils and demons. But, in the end, some scholars suspect that what the *War* boils down to is a desire on the part of Hell to impose definition to the state of Evil and this is something that the demons of The Abyss simply cannot abide. The *Blood War*, when stripped of the various rumors and legends, is a desire to define Evil for the entire Cosmos.

## **The Formation of the Dark Ministry of Hell**

# The Dark Ministry

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The importance of the *War* is such that its effects can be felt on every Perdition. However, most Courtiers of Perdition have little concern for the *War*, finding their time better spent on other endeavors. The reverse is true for the common devil; simply put, the *Blood War* is the single most important aspect of a common devil's existence. Performance in the *War* is a significant, if not the most significant, means of promotion in the Hierarchy of Hell and all common devils know this.

While Hell is often compared to a machine, it is also fair to say that Hell exists as one huge military structure. Hell wars against any and everything that attempts to oppose it. It should come to no surprise, then, to learn that there are different armies in Hell. In days past, each of the Lords of the Nine controlled monstrous armies. Each Lord committed a small fraction of his or her forces to service in the *Blood War*, with only the Lord of the First – be it Tiamat or Astarte – divesting more than 9% of her armies to battles against demons and daemons. This was largely due to the fact that Avernum was often the first and single most important line of defense against demonic invasion. The armies of Hell, collectively known as the Legions of Hell, were little more than bodyguards for their Courtiers of Perdition and their enemies were not demons but the armies of opposing Lords. While there were very few skirmishes, much less battles, those that did occur were mighty contests that exhibited complex strategies and ingenious tactics that put the best preparations of The Abyss to shame. All of this came to an end with the *Dies Irae*.

In the depths of Nessus, The King of Hell recognized a problem. The demonic and daemonic forces were growing in strength and influence across the Cosmos while those of Hell were weakening due to internecine conflicts. Rather than concentrate in the steady, but subtle manipulation of mortals and the direct and forceful confrontation against the madness and selfishness of lesser fiends in order to define the nature of Evil throughout Creation, Asmodeus watched his vassals squander Hell's resources on petty maneuverings that not only threatened Hell's cosmic status, but the Lords' own reputations. Asmodeus was never concerned that any of the Lords would be a threat to his station. Being smarter, wiser, and wilier than all of them, not to mention significantly more powerful, Asmodeus had no reason to fear being dethroned; however, this fact also meant that to the knowledgeable beyond Hell, his most important vassals were perceived as imbeciles which, in turn, reflected poorly on him and on Hell. So, Asmodeus, through the witless servants of witless servants of witless servants ensured that the two factions in Hell – the Devils True and The Fallen – escalated their mutual aggressions. While this occurred, he sent Constable Martinet out to secretly meet with the greatest pit fiends that directly served the various Lords. No one knows how many pit fiends were involved, but it probable that at least 81 were approached. In separate meetings, the Constable

told them that their King expected them to do everything to ensure the victory of their Lord until a signal was given by The Beast; at that time, the pit fiends would be given a choice, if they did as they knew they must, their rewards would make them the rulers of their kind. Thus did the *Dies Irae* rage.

After years of fighting, the factions of the *Dies Irae* met in the depths of Nessus, near the bottom of Malsheem close to the Pit of Darkness. There, the eight Lords of the Nine met in personal combat while their armies watched. There, after a signal from Martinet, Geryon the Beast blew his mighty horn and the pit fiends saw in their minds the choice: the victory of any Lord and the destruction of Hell or the defeat of all the Lords and Hell's power shackling the entire Cosmos. This was no choice at all, of course, so the pit fiends did what no common devil had never previously done: attacked a sitting Lord of the Nine. Despite being stripped of their cosmic powers, the Lords were still mighty enough to annihilate quite a few pit fiends, but in the end the Lords fell. Then the victorious Asmodeus appeared. His first act was to reward the pit fiends that revealed their ultimate loyalty to Hell. To the nine strongest surviving pit fiends, The Overlord of Hell granted dominion of the Legions of Hell. It would fall to these nine pit fiends to forge a grand Ministry of Hell. The purpose of this Ministry would be to preach the doctrines of Hell, its dominion, and its eventual control of all things, to the Cosmos. Through this Dark Ministry, the lesser fiends of The Abyss and the Gray Wastes of Despair would be the first to be reeducated with those that successful completing their instruction becoming true fiends: devils. And once this glorious doctrine was completed, the rest of Creation would follow. So did The Overlord hand control of the forces of Hell to the pit fiends, with nine serving at the pinnacle of power. These nine, Baalzephon, Cantrum, Corin, Dagos, Furcas, Pearza, Zaebos, Zapan, and Zimimar, became the Dark Ministers of Hell, the highest ranking military officials in Perdition. They answered to no one but Asmodeus.

In one fell swoop, Asmodeus stripped the Lords of their greatest assets against each other – thereby forcing them to find more subtle and appropriate means to seek greater power and influence – and placed this asset where it needed to be: out in the open so the entire Cosmos, particularly the lesser fiend spirits, could see. Most devils suddenly no longer answered directly to the nobility as most devils were now committed to the will of the Dark Ministry and, more importantly, to the King of Hell himself.

### The Standing Armies of Hell

With the establishment of the Dark Ministry there are few standing armies remaining in Hell. Most scholars believe that, since the *Dies Irae*, there are only two armies of importance in Hell. The smaller of the two is the Infer-

### The Dark Host of the Pit

 While the Dark Ministry is thought to have the largest army in Hell, some cardinals of Asmodeus and others that have culled ancient texts believe there is an even larger, far more deadly army. These scholars and seers call this hidden army the Dark Host of the Pit. Concealed in the depths of Nessus within the Pit of Darkness is an army at least nine times larger than the Dark Ministry at its peak. The Dark Host of the Pit is composed entirely of Nessian pit fiends, fully advanced cornugons, and malefircareim. All of the members of the Dark Host of the Pit are utterly, totally, and completely loyal to The Overlord of Hell; most – having been born from The Overlord's bleeding husk – have never left their father's side as they do all they can to keep to the peak of their abilities by torturing and destroying the damned souls that are slowly consumed by The Overlord. They do this in preparation for the day The Overlord rises from the depths of Perdition to reclaim the power he spent when he was part of The Circle of Three. This day may well be the Last Day of Creation.

**Table 6-1: The Legions of Hell Non-Commissioned Ranks**

| Army/Air               | Naval         | HD Minimum | Int Minimum | Greater Devil Caste if applicable <sup>1</sup> |
|------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------|--|
| Sergeant               | Able Hand     | 5 HD       | 10          | N/A  |
| Master Sergeant        | Petty Officer | 10 HD      | 13          | N/A  |
| Sergeant Major         | Chief         | 15 HD      | 14          | N/A  |
| Command Sergeant Major | Master Chief  | 20 HD      | 14          | cornugon                                       |

<sup>1</sup> A cornugon may be a command sergeant major or master chief even if it does not meet HD requirements.

nal Vanguard of Avernus, the armies of Bael; the larger is the Dark Ministry. While the other Lords still have their own armies, they are vastly smaller than they used to be, each composing approximately 3% of the total number of devils serving in military capacity.

The Infernal Vanguard of Avernus has its roots in the days of legendary Four Cross. Bael's success with the Four Cross and similar ventures solidified his status as one of the premiere generals in Hell, gaining him a huge number of unusually loyal troops. After he deposed Astarte and assumed the mantle of Lord of the First, Bael was granted the right to maintain control of his armies; indeed, he took at least one corps with him. In return for the huge army, Bael is expected to lend regular support to the Dark Ministry, particularly in their efforts to defend Hell against abyssal assaults on Avernus. It is assumed that the Infernal Vanguard has at least 9 trillion troops. This number does not necessarily include the armies of Bael's court; the 666 Legions that report to Abigor and the other ducal armies are not counted in this number. This enormous army has defended Avernus from all manner of assaults and, so long as Bael does not make the mistake of attacking another Perdition with it and continues to support the Dark Ministry, there is little to expect that it will do anything less than grow. Indeed, Bael does relatively little to keep his numbers high despite the horrific attrition rate; with the Maggot Pit and similar locations from which lemures emerge scattered across the First Perdition, Bael has a steady supply of ammunition and potential troops at hand. Yet, the Infernal Vanguard of Avernus is small compared to the number of devils that serve in the Dark Ministry.

The Dark Ministry is thought to possess at least 72 trillion devils with 9 trillion devils in each Infernal Denomination. In addition to size, there are significant philosophical differences between the devils of the Dark Ministry and those that serve in the Infernal Vanguard of Avernus. Among those in the Infernal Vanguard, the emphasis is on

the act of genocide against those that do not submit to Hell and, secondarily, to the glory of honorable War as represented in the person of the Lord of the First. The Infernal Vanguard seeks to annihilate all opposed to the ideals of Hell and establishes the most efficient and expeditious means to do so. This is in stark contrast to the Dark Ministry and its Denominations. Asmodeus' dictates continue to be the center of the Dark Ministry's mission: the spread the doctrine of Hell to all that continue to be lost. As such, the Dark Ministry is not so much interested in annihilating its foes as much as it is interested in forcing them to submit to the unquestioned truth of Hell's superiority and right to rule over Creation. The devils that serve in the Dark Ministry see themselves as fulfilling a goal far nobler than just making war for the sake of destroying enemies; they seek to impose the reality and supremacy of Hell by converting the ignorant to enlightenment. This is one of the reasons that there are different Infernal Denominations, some that do not appear to be as clearly military in nature.

Of course, aside from the Lords' retinues, the Infernal Vanguard of Avernus, and the Dark Ministry, there are other armies in Hell that could be mustered if the need arose. These values do not include the various Infernal Realms of renegade arch-devils or fallen angels that reside in Avernus (like Haagenti and Semyaza), nor the maleficareim that dwell in secret alliance under Verrier. Then there are the forces of the Lawful Evil gods. Tiamat, although not longer an official part of the Hierarchy of Hell, regularly lends draconic aid; her assumed son, Kurtulmak – the god of kobolds – likewise has been known to curry favors by granting his own servants to diabolical causes. Despite increased tensions with the Prince of Stygia, both Sekolah and Set could be persuaded to send in their own troops if Hell as a whole were threatened by outside forces. Finally, the Sovereigns of Sin – Bythal Dalax, Dauth Alman, and Lestoniises – have been known to grant aid, albeit

**Table 6-2: The Legions of Hell Commissioned Ranks<sup>1</sup>**

| Army/Air             | Naval      | HD Minimum | Int Minimum | Minimum Caste Requirement <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-------------|--|
| Lieutenant           | Lieutenant | 10 HD      | 14          | Any                                    |
| Captain              | Commander  | 15 HD      | 14          | cornugon                               |
| Major                | Captain    | 15 HD      | 14          | barregon                               |
| Colonel              | Commodore  | 18 HD      | 18          | gelugon <sup>3</sup>                   |
| General <sup>4</sup> | Admiral    | 24 HD      | 20          | pit fiend                              |

<sup>1</sup> Within the commissioned ranks, there are nine internal rankings known as circles. Thus a 1<sup>st</sup> circle lieutenant is lower ranked than a 2<sup>nd</sup> circle lieutenant and so on up the chain.

<sup>2</sup> The associated greater devil may assume the given rank even if it does not meet the HD requirements.

<sup>3</sup> Technically, almost all gelugons are colonels; however, the Dark Ministry keeps track of their internal rankings.

<sup>4</sup> There are very few non-pit fiends in the rank of general/admiral and all are either fully advanced or high class greater devils. There are only eight 9<sup>th</sup> circle generals, the Dark Ministers; of these, only Dagos uses a legitimate military title: Marshal of the Pits.

# The Dark Ministry

## Chapter Six

reluctantly, and would probably do so again if approached by Asmodeus.

### Hierarchy of the Dark Ministry

The Dark Ministry is Hell's largest public organization (it is probable that the cabals of the Order of the Lie and the Dark Host of the Pit are larger). It is also the best described and understood of Hell's organizations to those beyond Hell and stands as a testament to the power of Order. It covers not just every element of war, but defines the existences of the devils that serve within. It perfectly incorporates all aspects of Perdition save that of rulership, which is retained exclusively by the Lords.

The Dark Ministry can be perceived as two groups. Generally speaking, it is accurate to say that the Dark Ministry is the entirety of the army that contributes its endeavors to the *Blood War*; however, it is just as accurate to say that the Dark Ministry are the eight most powerful pit fiends in Hell. Most beyond Hell, for the sake of easily distinguishing the two groups, refer to the actual army as the Legions of Hell and the eight generals as the Dark Ministers. The Dark Ministers themselves are equals in every way, sharing the victories and the defeats Hell suffers in its contests against The Abyss and – to a lesser extent (for now) – everything and every place else in the Cosmos. They are Hell's greatest generals and directly control the existences of the majority of Hell's slaves. Despite this equality, each Dark Minister is responsible for specific elements in the *War* effort.

Despite what most may expect, although the Legions of Hell are trained and expected to fight (the preferred term is “instruct”) in real combat, most are not part of combat arms. The Infernal Denomination of Strategy is just one of eight Infernal Denominations that answers to just one of the eight Dark Ministers.

### Espionage

This Denomination is responsible for the gathering of information for the benefit of Hell and for “correcting” the information Hell's foes receive as it relates to the *War* effort.

### Immortal Diplomacy

This Denomination is charged with establishing and maintaining effective relationships with other immortal constituencies to Hell's benefit in the *War* effort. This is

not limited to Lawful Good angels and the axiomatic spirits of Nirvana as there are ties with the Gray Wastes, Limbo, and even The Abyss.

### Morale

This Denomination not only strives to keep devils and associated warriors in peak physical, psychological, and spiritual performance levels but distributes information to the Cosmos at large that encourages the uninitiated to recognize Hell's inevitable and rightful place ruling the Cosmos.

### Mortal Relations

This Denomination is charged with recruiting and maintaining healthy relationships with mortals as it pertains to the *War* effort.

### Promotion

In addition to tracking the performance of all devils across the Ministry, this Denomination also supervises the communication between the different lines.

### Research

This Denomination develops more efficient means to instruct non-devils on the primacy of Hell as well as means to make devils themselves more productive in the reeducation of the Cosmos whether through magical, physical, psychological, or spiritual means.

### Strategy

This Denomination is the official combat arms branch of the Dark Ministry. It includes those devils that contribute the entirety of their existence to on-site reeducation of external forces.

### Supply

The devils in this Denomination oversee the allocation of all supplies in addition to providing transportation across the Dark Ministry.

No one Infernal Denomination is accorded more respect to another, although the Denomination of Strategy remains the best known. Each Infernal Denomination shares a number of things in common with its siblings. First and foremost, there is a fairly consistent ranking system across all Denominations. Each Denomination is composed of both lesser devils, which typically serve in a capacity similar to that of non-commissioned troops (or acolytes), and

**Table 6-3: Denomination Unit Structure**

| Unit*  | Unit Composition                         |
|--|--|
| Denomination (e.g. Denomination of Strategy) | All Branches (typically three)           |
| Branch                                       | As many Corps as needed (typically nine) |
| Corps  | 99 Divisions                             |
| Division                                     | 81 Brigades                              |
| Brigade                                      | 81 Regiments                             |
| Regiment                                     | 81 Battalions                            |
| Battalion                                    | 9 Companies                              |
| Company                                      | 9 Platoons                               |
| Platoon                                      | 9 Squads                                 |
| Squad  | 9 devils                                 |

\*The Denomination of Strategy's aerial and naval Branches have different unit names as described below

greater devils, who almost always serve as commissioned officers (or clergy). While it is impossible for greater devils other than cornugons to be “non-commissioned,” there are cases of certain lesser devils (usually erinyes, nar zugons, and osyluths) to serve in “commissioned” capacities. Tables 6 – 1 and 6 – 2 include both army and naval rankings; there is not a rank for foot soldiers as they are not considered worthy of any recognition until they do something to earn it while the likes of lemures and nupperibos are considered ammunition rather than foot soldiers.

Each Dark Minister decides how to best supervise her or his troops, but there are some parallels. All Denominations have nine Branch heads, usually referred to as generals or admirals, who report to a Dark Minister. The various Branch heads are typically charged the responsibility of overseeing one of the Corps within the branches. There are many generals serving under the Corps general and they are tasked with the supervision of a Division. Most Division leaders are low to mid-ranked generals (pit fiends) who receive direct report from high ranking colonels (gelugons) or low ranking generals (pit fiends) that maintain a Brigade. Under each Brigade, there are no longer similarities of any sort. Each is run differently and based upon the mission. There also exist special force groups that are the equivalent of Corps. In possession of their own chain of command, such special forces have different ranking systems from the traditional Corps structure and typically report directly to a Dark Minister. Other military have no authority over special forces regardless of rank. It is extremely odd to find lower ranked lesser devils, like spinagons, squamugons, and barbazu, serving in special forces.

Typically speaking, the general unit breakdown in each Denomination functions under the number (unsurprisingly) nine. The smallest unit in most cases is a nine devil Squad. Nine Squads form a Platoon. The chain of command is given in total in Table 6 – 3: Denomination Unit Structure.

### The Infernal Denomination of Espionage (Dark Minister Corin the Spymaster)

#### Branches

*Infiltration* – information gathering and study of opposed ideals.

*Reconnaissance* – scouts the areas of combat, establishes frontline preparation.

*Sabotage* – liquidation of blasphemous targets, burning of supply lines, etc.

#### Generals

*Infiltration* – Bendrist, Izmeldriel, Nurquist

*Reconnaissance* – Hiistrial, Seraptic, Vistereon

*Sabotage* – Krimwal, Ormam, Raptilion

The devils serving within the Infernal Denomination of Espionage are among the craftiest and dangerous denizens of the Depths Below. The only thing obvious about them is their motive, the promotion of Hell; all other things, from their true appearances to their powers and skills, are rarely as they seem and always to the detriment of their enemies. Of all the Denominations of the Dark Ministry, only the devils serving under Pearza, the Chief of Research, have as much free reign. As far as Spymaster Corin is concerned, so long as the operatives within his Denomination get their jobs done without whole-heartedly

accepting the doctrines and natures of demons and daemons, he will support them (temporarily adopting demonic or daemonic behavior is an expected aspect of an espionage operative's job).

The overarching goal of the Infernal Denomination of Espionage is to gather information that will lead to the elimination of demons with the lowest loss rate among devils possible. Thus, in many ways, the devils of this Denomination appear to share much with their brethren in Strategy in that they are not interested in talking or considering alternatives to instruction. They live and breathe the permanent re-education of demons and little else. Yet, the operatives of Espionage are really a class unto themselves, relying heavily on intuition, flexibility, creativity, and the ability to think outside of the box in order to accomplish their goals. They bear very little of the structure associated with the devils of Strategy and none of the true charisma of the devils of Immortal Diplomacy or Mortal Relations; they are actors who perform their tasks with the sole expectation of overcoming enemy forces. The only devils with whom those of Espionage have any regular dealings with are those of Research, who value the information collected by Corin's troops, Immortal Diplomacy, who use the intelligence from Espionage to help with their summits, and those of Morale, who experience some overlap in duties (and this overlap does little more than create tensions).

Among each other, the operatives of Espionage rarely know much about their compatriots. Corin's perspective is that the less they know about fellow operatives, the less likely important and potentially damaging information as be hemorrhaged in the event an operative is captured (as only the most important captured devils can ever hope to be rescued... and often promptly demoted for failing to complete a mission). As such, most squads only know their peers and even then most squads are formed to accomplish a specific task after which they are reassigned. Lieutenants and sergeants often only know one or two other equally ranked operatives and only occasionally personally know their immediate commander as they often receive orders telepathically or else through classified channels (like special imps that relay the command in the form of a *quest* and die immediately thereafter). As a result of the internal structure, the devils of Espionage really do not have any kind of camaraderie below the colonel/captain rank. Higher ranking operatives are often privy to a great deal more information and are certain that the Legions of Hell would fall apart were it not for the work their Denomination has accomplished.

The devils that occupy the lower ranks of Espionage are black squamugon and erinyes with imps and spinagons serving in support roles. It is not unusual for erinyes to possess class levels in rogue or wizard. The middle ranks are made up of higher ranking erinyes and hamatulas and osyluths. Hamatulas, notorious among the lesser devils for their independence, make superb operatives in Espionage, particularly as lower-ranked liquidators. Osyluths are often used for reconnaissance, although hamatulas with ranger or scout levels excel in this regard as well. The highest ranks among the Denomination of Espionage are those that serve in the Branch of Infiltration and Sabotage and is dominated by high ranking hamatulas and cornugons and gelugons. The hamatulas and cornugons are well designed for work as saboteurs and often achieve spectacular results. However, it is among the gelugons that much of the glory is achieved as they use their natural *polymorph* powers to assume middle to high ranking roles among demonic and even daemonic forces.

## The Espionage Branch of Infiltration (Generals Bendrist, Izmeldriel, Nurquist)

The Espionage Branch of Infiltration has one of the most dangerous duties in the Legions. They usurp the identities of enemy operatives, and remain with the enemy, causing as much damage as possible through their actions. They are also responsible for the gathering of information that they in turn relay back to the Ministry.

*Alter self, disguise self, polymorph*, or magic items that produce their effects are all commonly used throughout this Branch. *Non-detection* and *magic aura* are also used to maintain cover identities. However, mundane disguise prowess is a requirement. Too many demons possess *true seeing* to rely wholly on magical means for these devils to successfully carry out their duties.

Infiltration units typically field three or nine agents at a time in the equivalent of a battalion or larger-sized enemy unit. The operatives typically assume the identity of low ranking and unimportant personnel with access to key areas, such as supply. Usually, placement occurs after liquidators of the Espionage Branch of Sabotage remove the enemy personnel intended for replacement allowing the Infiltration troops to take over. Slowly they redirect information and resources to benefit Hell or cause the enemy to fail in attacks or operations against the Legions at key moments. These missions can last decades or more depending on how long the team is able to keep their identities concealed. Those who were assisting the Warlord Bael when he was a general in the Legions during his infamous Four Cross remained undercover for three full centuries.

Higher ranking targets can be removed and replaced, although these ventures are usually much shorter. The risk of a higher level demon being found out is extremely high (particularly those directly serving a unique demon or demon lord), and even the hardiest troops of Corin have no desire to spend the rest of their existence under the ministrations of a molydeus. Thus, after removing and replacing a high level demon, the plans are usually quickly set in motion to exact the most desirable gain from the gamble. Usually this involves setting the troops under the command against their allied units. The irony of the situation is that demons do this on their own with little to no encouragement so often that it is rarely traced back to the devils.

In addition to replacing demons and other enemies of Hell, Infiltration also gathers information on activities behind enemy lines, setting them apart from the devils of the Branch of Reconnaissance. In this capacity, they often have to appear as demons, but just as frequently take on the shapes of those that would do business with demons, giving them greater flexibility. Furthermore, these operatives are often found gathering information and learning secrets across the Cosmos on matters of interest to Hell's eventual victory in the *Blood War*. However, they strive to remain in the shadows and go out of their way to avoid conflict even with far lesser beings. Interestingly, these devils often discover acts of treason among the Courtiers of Perdition due to their immersion and are unofficially charged with handling such matters. Noble acts of treachery are always reported to and handled by Dark Minister Corin.

Infiltration troops always have maximum ranks in Bluff, Disguise, and Gather Information. Search and Sense Mo-

tive are also priority skills.

**General Izmeldriel (7<sup>th</sup> circle 25 HD pit fiend, psion 10/uncarnate 10):** The Supreme Commander of the Branch of Infiltration, Izmeldriel is a sinister figure cloaked in secrecy. Often referred to with a female pronoun, the truth is that no one save the Dark Ministers know Izmeldriel's true gender designation much less her true form. That she is a pit fiend is generally unquestioned as it is thought that the Dark Ministers would never give the rank of 7<sup>th</sup> circle general to a non-pit fiend, much less a non-devil. Still, this is but conjecture. Izmeldriel leads her branch through mystic messages, dreams, nightmares, and visions and then only with her Executive Officer, Bendrist, and her Chief Operations Officer, Nurquist. Her control over them is absolute and the only thing they fear more than Izmeldriel is Corin himself. Izmeldriel appears to know intimate details of all infiltration missions and is well aware of the internal politics within the upper echelons of the Legions of Hell. It is unclear to what degree she has an interest in becoming the new Spymaster. Although she is not thought to have served as the Supreme Commander of Infiltration for an overly long period of time, she did predate Zaebos' bid to promote all pit fiends, so she is not indebted to the Minister of Promotions. As a result, her goals are unclear and it doubtful that she looks out for anyone but herself and the success of the missions she is charged with overseeing.

**General Bendrist (6<sup>th</sup> circle 20 HD pit fiend, assassin 20):** Bendrist is the visible head of the Branch of Infiltration and, while not as shadowy as his commanding officer, he is almost as talented an actor and possibly an even more deadly assassin. As the Executive Officer of Infiltration, all lower ranking generals and colonels of the branch work very closely with him and, unlike the Supreme Commander, this interaction is in person. Bendrist is more feared than he is respected by his subordinates. He is not particularly honorable and has no issues with turning coat on those that are brought under question by Izmeldriel or Corin. Unfortunately for them, he knows his business exceptionally well and is as crafty as he is treacherous; none of the many forced retirement attempts have worked on him to date (and the perpetrators all met with grisly ends). Bendrist himself is terrified of Izmeldriel – who has proven a few times that she is not only capable of second-guessing his plots but also has her own personal agents among his staff -- and is also careful not to appear to be a challenge to Corin. The closest thing to an ally he has is Nurquist, although he knows that Chief Operating Officer is as untrustworthy as he.

**General Nurquist (6<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, exemplar 10/spymaster 7):** As Chief Operating Officer of Infiltration, Nurquist works as the primary liaison between the various Branches of Espionage and, when needed, with other Denominations (primarily Morale). He ensures that implanted agents are never accidentally destroyed during diabolical assaults and he makes sure that various agents are never working towards opposite ends. As a result, he is arguably the most well informed devil aside from his two superiors and the Order of the Fly (if one excludes the secretive Order of the Lie). He is as organized as Bendrist is treacherous, but unlike the XO, he has managed to be successful without backstabbing his subordinates. Of course, Nurquist is extremely conniving; he just manages

to be so without being obvious. His knowledge of what is occurring throughout the Ministry is such that he never has to worry about his station being threatened; furthermore, although he is not as political as most pit fiends, he has used his information to ensure that those he perceives as threats meet with unfortunate accidents in the field. The only creatures Nurquist fears are his superiors (the Lords of the Nine are too distant from his sphere of concern to worry about) and Vhesage, the Governor of Nessus. He covets Izmeldriel's position, but knows, after watching the numerous occasions she effortlessly embarrassed Bendrist, that any attempts against the Supreme Commander are likely to be futile. In Corin he sees what he could eventually become and is actually quite loyal to the Spymaster. He and Bendrist work well together and appear to enjoy each other's company.

#### **The Espionage Branch of Reconnaissance (Generals Hiistrial, Seraptic, Vistereon)**

The Espionage Branch of Reconnaissance is concerned with the scouting and gathering of front line information on active battles, particularly enemy troop breakdown and advancement. Reconnaissance operatives often work directly in the path of an oncoming demonic horde; as a result their casualty rates are quite high.

Unlike recon units in mortal armies, those of the Legions of Hell will attempt "thinning the herd" of the enemy. Although they go out of their way to avoid direct combat (that is the province of the Infernal Denomination of Strategy), lingering demon troops tend to wind up missing in action as a result of unexpected encounters with recon operatives. Recon troops also set traps along the path of advancement. Although not as deadly or intricate as those of the combat engineers, they serve their purpose.

Recon operatives often use their *teleport* ability to relay information and messages back to their platoon leaders who make sure the proper commanders receive access. They make extensive use of invisibility, so those devils who do not possess it as a spell-like ability usually carry *scrolls* or *rings of invisibility* on their persons. Items that grant a Hide or Move Silently bonus are also prized.

Recon missions are executed in the typical squads of nine although individual members are not often within close range of each other. To aid them, the *telepathic bond* spell is often cast in conjunction with *permanency* on members of the same recon team, keeping them in mental contact with each other.

Spot and Listen are priority skills for recon operatives with Move Silently and Hide following right behind. Search and Survival are also very common.

**General Vistereon (7<sup>th</sup> circle, Order of the Bleeding Blade, 36 HD pit fiend, blackguard 9):** Vistereon is one of the oldest devils serving in the Dark Ministry. Indeed, he is one of the devils rewarded for attacking the Lords of the Nine during the *Dies Irae*. Although he was not destined to become of the Dark Ministers, Vistereon did have his choice of appointments once the Legions of Hell were restructured and, despite his options, he asked to work as the Supreme Commander of Reconnaissance under Minister Corin. Given his talents as a field commander, Vistereon's motives for requesting an assignment within the Denomination of Espionage remain unclear to all but himself, but most have long since stopped publicly wondering about his interests. He has been nothing short of remark-

able in his duties and routinely personally oversees recon operations in the larger and more important battles. Vistereon is also one of the few devils outside of the Ministry that is aware of the fact that at least some of the Dark Ministers are not the original appointees. To date, he has not given so much as an indication of his knowledge. The truth is that Vistereon is a double agent for the daemons and has actually been in the pocket of the Poison of Perdition, Sammael, for some time. For reasons all his own, Vistereon has not shared his knowledge of the Dark Ministry's secret with his true master. His working relationship with Corin is among the best of the high ranking generals in Espionage; Vistereon also seems to get along reasonably well with the two other 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals. Vistereon is leery of Hiistrial, but does not believe he has to truly worry about the COO yet. He is also somewhat wary with Seraptic; he cannot understand how the XO manages to maintain his job, particularly after he has asked Corin to remove the XO. Despite his reservations, Vistereon has allowed himself to be taken in as Seraptic's confidant in the hopes of finding out what the XO knows about Corin that allows him to maintain his post.

**General Hiistrial (6<sup>th</sup> circle 27 HD pit fiend, marshal 14):** As the Chief Operations Officer of Reconnaissance, Hiistrial serves as the liaison between the branch and other Denominations. Unsurprisingly, he works very closely with the Infernal Denomination of Strategy; as a field commander before the *Dies Irae*, he is well versed in the art of war and gets along easily enough with Minister Dagos and his generals. Hiistrial is convinced of his own superiority, however, and does little to conceal his arrogance before those unfamiliar with his talents; to date, this smugness has not gained him particularly dangerous enemies within the Legions, but only his skill has dissuaded some from putting him in his place. Although he is not the XO, Hiistrial is far more organized and authoritative than Seraptic. On more than one occasion, Corin has gone to Hiistrial to tend to matters in which Seraptic technically should have been responsible. It is unclear whether or not Corin intends of folding the XO's leadership duties into Hiistrial's responsibilities, but the latter appears to have no qualms taking the work and not receiving vocal credit... For now. The Chief Operating Officer works reasonably well with his peers; he is also relatively fond of Krimwal of Sabotage and with the generals of the Strategic Branch of Land.

**General Seraptic (6<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, cleric 5/dread inquisitor 10/spymaster 6):** Seraptic is a devil of old. Like his peers in recon, he was once a field commander; although he was not one of the pit fiends approached by Martinet, he was present when the Lords of the Nine fell. He spent centuries serving within the Infernal Denomination of Strategy and won many a battles through careful planning, spying, and subterfuge. Then, for no apparent reason, he requested a transfer to Espionage. Dagos and Corin agreed to the request and Seraptic was even placed as the Executive Officer of Reconnaissance. Since his appointment, he has slowly been divested of more and more of his responsibilities as Hiistrial assumes his duties. What no one other than Seraptic and the Dark Ministers knows is that the Executive Officer is actually an operative from the Infernal Denomination of Morale sent to keep an eye on Vistereon. He feigns ignorance and incompetence, apparently doing just enough to meet the duties of his post as he is slowly stripped of more and more responsibility. He has slowly taken to confiding in

Vistereon, who – to date – has no reason to suspect anything amiss, but has not divulged any of his own secrets to the mole. Seraptic is truly a gifted actor and has accomplished a great deal more in his relationship with Vistereon than either Zimimar or Corin expected. Indeed, once Seraptic's job is completed, Corin intends on reshuffling his senior generals by placing Seraptic in either Infiltration or Sabotage.

### **The Espionage Branch of Sabotage (Generals Krimwal, Ormam, Raptilion)**

Sabotage covers enemy asset liquidation. Assets can be supplies, buildings, or creatures.

The covert destruction of supplies and buildings is typically accomplished prior to any actual force engagements. Despite what mortals would expect, *teleportation* is rarely used to initiate these activities. *Teleportation* is often one of the first warded and defended abilities. Sabotage teams do not *teleport* in first; rather, they *teleport* a distance away from the target and move in under mundane methods.

Structural damage is usually accomplished through acid or sonic damage, although fire is not uncommon. When subtlety is required, acid is the preferred method. If disruption and panic is part of the goal, fire and sonics are brought into play. Magic often plays a large role in sabotage. *Acid fog*, *earthquake*, *shatter* and others are utilized, generally through special 'delay' scrolls. These delay scrolls must be activated like normal scrolls, but do not take immediate effect. The delay can be anywhere from a few rounds to a day. Casting *dispel magic* or counter spelling can take place anytime from the time the scroll is activated until it actually casts.

As the Espionage Branch of Sabotage relies heavily on spell completion magical items, all branch operatives are trained and possess maximum skill ranks in Use Magic Device. Hide and Move Silently are also high priority skills, with Disable Device, Gather Information, Listen, Open Lock, Search, and Spot rounding out the list.

Sabotage missions usually call for three teams of three, each attacking separate targets before a rendezvous for extraction.

An important subset within the Branch of Sabotage are the liquidators, which most would call assassins. Liquidators focus on the creature side of removable assets. While class levels are not a requirement, the majority of the members of this corps possess them. Rogue, assassin, scout, and ranger are the most common by far, but there are a few fighters, monks, and even wizards.

Like saboteurs, assassins do not clumsily blunder into their targets with the telegraphed *teleports* that so often mark demonic attempts. Instead they move under their own power once they are in the hot zone.

Targets are usually taken out privately, swiftly, and efficiently. At times members of the Strategic Branch of Infiltration work with the liquidators, assuming the identity and position of the slain in order to undermine the enemy from within.

Other assassinations are huge public affairs designed to sow fear and distrust in the enemy. The target is attacked at a time and place where his demise is seen by as many as possible. Only the boldest and best of the liquidators are allowed to attempt these missions which are frequently fatal even for the successful devil (who takes his own life if he's lucky... better than taken prisoner by demons).

Assassination missions usually call for three troops per target: one primary, one cover, and a back guard. They are often ranged sniper affairs, so all assassins boast high Dexterity score along with ranged combat feats. Hide and Move Silently are a priority, with Listen, Spot and Survival rounding out preferred Skills. Liquidators are issued whatever custom weaponry they like (within the realms of reality for their rank) but the brilliant energy and distant enchantments are universally popular.

**General Raptilion (7<sup>th</sup> circle 28 HD pit fiend, assassin 7/rogue 10):** Often referred to as The Mute, Raptilion is the exceptionally dangerous Supreme Commander of Sabotage. Although far more visible than Izmeldriel, Raptilion is just as feared for he directly oversees all assassination orders for the Legions of Hell and it is thought that, on rare occasion, his services are called upon by the Denomination of Morale to tend to devils as well. Raptilion rarely speaks; indeed, he rarely even bothers to communicate with telepathy, preferring to use a magical quill to write his thoughts in air beside his head or else directly into the minds of others. Raptilion is more of a big picture leader, allowing his two subordinates to tend to day-to-day concerns and issues while he addresses overarching needs. In some ways, he is the most able of Corin's generals and most believe that if anyone was a threat to the Spymaster's status, it would be Raptilion. Raptilion seems largely uninterested in retiring Corin; his eyes are set for entry into the nobility of either Stygia or Maladomini where he believes his talents would be better appreciated. Until such time, Raptilion continues to excel in his duties. For the most part, he ignores both Izmeldriel and Vistereon unless his duties require that he interact with them; the other generals rarely draw his notice.

**General Krimwal (6<sup>th</sup> circle 18 HD pit fiend, war mage 22):** Meticulous and hot-tempered, Krimwal is the Executive Officer of Sabotage. If devils had anything like a pyromaniac, Krimwal would fit the bill as he is obsessed with watching things explode. He oversees all sabotage efforts and tends to all branch related issues and details. Junior officers fear and revile him, but are too afraid and too aware of his leadership talent to risk seeking his retirement. He meets with his commanding officer more than his peer, Ormam, although he finds no pleasure in doing so. Krimwal detests Raptilion whom he perceives as a theatrical fool. However, he knows better than to challenge the Supreme Commander whom he suspects would not hesitate to destroy him... At least until he discovers the means to sabotage his leader's status, something Krimwal is slowly working out how to accomplish. Fortunately for Krimwal, Raptilion cannot envision either of his subordinates doing any such thing and Krimwal is more than competent enough to hide his desires. Krimwal works well with Ormam despite the fact that the two devils strongly dislike each other. The only high ranking devil with whom Krimwal has a decent relationship is Hiistrial, with whom he shared much in common. So far, though, Krimwal has not filled Hiistrial in on his intentions and it is unclear whether or not he trusts the other general enough to risk it.

**General Ormam (6<sup>th</sup> circle 21 HD pit fiend, assassin 9/oracle 10):** As organized as his peer, General Krimwal, General Ormam has more of the typical pit fiend's temperament: simmering hate and barely concealed arrogance. As the Chief Operating Officer of Sabotage, Ormam works closely with the other Chief Officers of Espionage and

especially with the Denomination of Strategy. Self-reliant and proactive, Ormam goes out of his way to discover opportunities to weaken enemy fronts and, more importantly as far as he is concerned, areas behind enemy lines. While he does not work closely with Raptilion, Ormam is in some ways more like his Supreme Commander than Krimwal in that he is more of an assassin than anything else. To him, the destruction of non-sentient assets without the destruction of enemy forces is a wasted effort and he does his best to ensure that the greatest number of Hell's foes are destroyed when he works with other Denominations and Branches. Ormam views Raptilion as somewhat odd, but ignores his idiosyncrasies so long as the Supreme Commander continues to give him freedom to act. He strongly dislikes Krimwal, whom he perceives as clumsy and rash.

### The Infernal Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy (Dark Minister Zapan)

#### Branches

*Ambassadorial Relations* – establishes diplomatic ties with blasphemous agents in order to further Hell's goals.

*Informal Contacts* – establishes and maintains unofficial relations with angels, demons, gods, and similar constituencies.

*Military Coordination* – drafts treaties and contracts, accepts and negotiates surrenders, ensures allied support is properly directed, and keeps friendly fire to a minimum.

#### Generals

*Ambassadorial Relations* – Auerias, Pallestrin, Visterial

*Informal Contacts* – Cartellic, Sarmel, Xalric

*Military Coordination* – Baalberith, Gresticas, Lissel

Although one of the more prominent spiritual beings in the Cosmos, devils cannot afford to ignore the efforts of other similar entities. This is especially the case in the *Blood War* for while bulk of the fighting is between devils and the demons of The Abyss, other beings have a stake in the eventual outcome. Rather than risk being affected by the machinations of other spirits through ignorance, the Dark Ministry erected the Infernal Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy. Through this facet of the Ministry, the devils make it a point to determine where the other major (and even minor) players stand in relation to the *Blood War* and do their best to make their position work to the advantage of Hell.

Immortal Diplomacy comes across as one of the least militant Denominations in the Legions of Hell. Under the leadership of Zapan, Immortal Diplomacy has striven to offer Perdition's soft touch. There are never threats; there is no braggadocio; there is no posturing. Rather, the devils reveal to their immortal constituents the value of working with the Legions of Hell or, if a partnership of some sort cannot be established, why keeping out of Hell's way is beneficial to both parties. The agents of Immortal Diplomacy do not bother to lie about Hell's ultimate goal: complete and total control of all existence; however, they make it clear that until such a time arrives, there are opportunities for devils to do business with other immortal beings. If that means greater access into mortal worlds, the elimination of hated foes, the expansion of a specific philoso-

phy, the rediscovery of ancient magic, or any number of things, Hell is willing to consider *quid pro quo* opportunities.

Of course, to the Cosmos-at-large, the agents of Immortal Diplomacy are not dealt with lightly. These devils are among the most gifted orators in the Ministry, in many ways outstripping the devils of Mortal Relations. After all, they must interact with creatures as old and almost as intelligent (as far as the devils are concerned) as they, and they must do their best to make sure that whatever they offer really does appear to be beneficial. It is a challenging responsibility that has as many victories as failures and the various ambassadors often consider their jobs successful if they can maintain a status quo that does not grant demons greater support. Indeed, Immortal Diplomacy is the only Denomination that interacts with demons in any official capacity excluding reeducation (combat) efforts, making them unique among their peers. They also work very closely with daemons, a dubious honor so far as the other Denominations are concerned given the Neutral Evil fiends' predilection for traitorous behavior.

Immortal Diplomacy works extremely closely with Espionage, relying heavily on intelligence that can be used to the right amount of enticement in dealings, be that enticement pressure or promises. This working relationship is very strong as the two groups perceive themselves as working towards the same goals in different ways with Espionage destroying the physical obstacles and Diplomacy the spiritual. Ambassadors occasionally work with Mortal Relations, particularly when a powerful cosmic or divine being is questioning the validity of an arrangement with mortal agencies. Reports to Strategy are frequent when it relates to daemonic mercenary deployments and intelligence delivered from other constituents on demonic incursions or efforts. Finally, Diplomacy has direct ties to the Court of Nessus. Zapan often meets with the Constable of Nessus, Duke Martinet, to be kept abreast on matters of cosmic and divine import that may have an impact on the Legions. Martinet has been ordered by Asmodeus not to play the usual games with the Dark Ministry or Zapan, so he is certain to give pertinent and accurate information (if Zapan is smart enough to ask for it).

The devils of Immortal Relations perceive themselves as extremely cosmopolitan. Chameleon-like in their ability to adapt to different immortal groups, they enjoy knowing how such creatures think in order to better manipulate them to Hell's ends. Ironically, though, these devils are also conservative. Although not outwardly zealous, they are convinced of Hell's eventual hegemony. Zapan requires frequent Indoctrination sessions for his devils upon completion of major assignments to ensure that they have not been infected with improper ideas from their contacts.

#### Diplomatic Branch of Ambassadorial Relations (Generals Auerias, Pallestrin, Visterial):

One of the most visible branches to immortal agencies beyond Perdition, the Diplomatic Branch of Ambassadorial Relations is responsible for long term, official contracts between Hell and other parties from the Realms Beyond. Due to the Legions' ultimate diabolical goals, there are no official relations conducted through this branch with the Angelic Choirs or with the demons; such activities are managed by the staff of Informal Contacts.

Spinagon, erinyes, cornugons and pit fiends make up nearly the entirety of devils in the branch. Fallen angels are

also found in extreme abundance.

There are three corps within the Ambassadorial Relations: Corps of Blasphemers, Corps of the Heretics, and Corps of the Lost. Each corps contains numerous divisions, although some are better known than others. Each division is led by a 5<sup>th</sup> circle general referred to as Imperial Ambassadors. Only a few maintain perpetual domiciles in the realms of the beings with whom they officially interact as most non-Evil spirits would prefer not to allow fiend's perpetual haven in their realms. Each Imperial Ambassador maintains his or her division based upon the relationship with the constituent in question. All Imperial Ambassadors report to an Arch Ambassador, one of the three 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals that run the entire branch. What follows are brief descriptions of the better known divisions in the three corps; there are many others to be sure, but these have the most important duties.

#### Corps of Blasphemers (General Pallestrin)

The Corps of Blasphemers is considered the most important to the Dark Ministry as the diplomats herein are tasked with dealing with creatures that are not known for their dependability, but nevertheless have a profound impact on the direction the *Blood War*. Most of the diplomats of this corps actually live elsewhere, either in the reality of their constituents or else in neutral territory where they have easy access to their marks. The Corps of Blasphemers relies heavily on intelligence from the Denomination of Espionage to be successful; the corps has a battalion of Espionage Branch of Infiltration agents attached to them at all times.

*The Bronze Division:* A very large and diverse division, the Bronze diplomats tends to immortal creatures that are by-and-large Lawful Evil or at least Lawful Neutral but do not have enough meaningful interaction with Hell to have their own corps. Creatures like beholders and illithids are the better known creatures with whom this corps interacts. In most cases, the devils of the Bronze Division are more interested in keeping track with the activities of these beings to make sure they do not eventually adversely impact Hell. Until recently, the Dark Ministry would not allow routine relations between the Legions and illithids, leaving such interactions to the Dukes of Hell. The Dark Ministry changed this policy a few hundred years ago and it is possible that the mindflayers will soon have their own dedicated division of ambassadors. This is a division for new generals to test their skills. Many psions operate in this division, as do those with significant arcane power. Sense Motive is a highly prized skill.

*The Ebon Division:* Possibly the most important divisions in the Branch, the Ebon Division deals exclusively with daemons and other Neutral Evil spirits. It is through this division that all daemonic mercenaries and official intelligence are arranged and gathered. Far more militant in nature than the other divisions, the Ebon consist of some of the most cerebral and gifted ambassadors in Hell. Routine success in this division all but guarantees promotion. The Ebon Division is careful to make sure all of its deals are upon the infernal parchments before considering any mission a success. Most meetings between devils and daemons take place in the Concordant Opposition of the Outlands or Sigil (when between lesser fiends) or in Gehenna (between greater fiends). There are few specific daemons the devils seek to deal with, although greater devils always deal with greater daemons and, if possible, prefer to assign stronger lesser devils to interact with weaker lesser dae-

mons. Two names are often thrown out. There are persistent rumors that A'Kin, an arcanodaemon in Sigil, is a frequent contact by none other than Zapan himself. Another less likely possibility is Shemeska the Marauder of Sigil; given her dedication to Sigil's politics, this is unlikely. Bluff and Sense Motive skills run very high throughout this corps, even to the point of agents taking several feats to increase them. The lies that run rampant through negotiations between this corps devils and their daemonic contacts are enough to make an angel violently ill. Quicken Spell-like Ability (*greater teleport*) is a common feature of the Ebon Division. Too often they walk into negotiations only to find a demonic ambush waiting for them.

Pallestrin actually serves as the Imperial Ambassadors to the daemons. Since he retired the last Imperial Ambassador, there have been fewer betrayals by the nether spirits and he has been able to renegotiate far lower mercenary fees by giving the denizens of the Wastes greater reason to betray the demons (by manipulating the truth without lying). So far, the daemons have not determined Pallestrin's ploy, but if they do, Pallestrin already has a number of other distractions prepared.

*The Silver Division:* The diplomats of the Silver Division attempt to ensure that the rilmani, the purveyors of Balance across the Cosmos, are disinclined to interfere in Hell's affairs. As such they have the delicate task of down-playing infernal successes and pointing out other, non-Lawful Evil threats to the Great Balance. A combination of Bluff and Diplomacy are essential to successful summits. When the rilmani are happy, the Silver Division is happy. When the rilmani are not happy, the Silver Division's ire prompts the Denomination of Morale to encourage more discretion among the Denominations. The devils do their best to manipulate the rilmani into attacking demonic agents. Given that the rilmani only act when they think the demons are getting the upper hand, the Dark Ministry gathers up failures across the Legions and sends these unwitting fools on suicide missions in The Abyss or anywhere they are guaranteed to encounter Chaotic Evil (and sometimes any Good) foes. Obviously, these units are massacred.

When the ambassadors of Immortal Diplomacy next meet with the rilmani, they point out these "devastating setbacks," playing them up as horrible losses. The rilmani, upon investigating, find that the demons indeed have been destroying the devils troops in mass numbers and unilaterally move to trim back demon numbers. Depending on who gets the upper hand (determined by Bluff vs. Sense Motive checks) in such diplomatic ventures, the rilmani may only trim back worthless and weak demons or they may actually deal some serious setbacks to The Abyss' forces. "Balance" is served.

Either way, this is a "win-win" for the Legions as they got rid of some worthless troops and stirred up the rilmani against the demons. When the devils fail in such endeavors, they lose some worthless troops and draw the rilmani's attention to their wool-pulling operations. Status quo maintained and a minor black mark on the evaluations of the devils in charge.

While Pallestrin (and Zapan) is generally satisfied with this arrangement, he is growing weary of having to worry about rilmani considerations. He suspects that the time will eventually come that more drastic measures will have to be taken to remind the rilmani with whom they are dealing. When this time approaches, he will bring his concerns to Zapan and the Dark Ministers.

# Chapter Six: The Dark Ministry

**General Pallestrin (7<sup>th</sup> circle Order of the Bleeding Blade 24 HD pit fiend, evangelist 5/rogue 16):** Arch Ambassador Pallestrin is a wily pit fiend with a penchant for beating terrible odds and, in the event that he does appear to fail, returning with inconceivable victories. Pallestrin is often called the Smiling Serpent for there are few devils that smile as sincerely and handsomely as he. Pallestrin is a diplomat's diplomat, courteous and inviting, convincing and apparently interested in what others have to say. Of course, the reality of the Arch Ambassador of Blasphemers is that he is a suave tyrant, using his words and his actions to make it clear that any that hope to get anything of value out him had better have something equally important to offer in return. Pallestrin is a task master, never giving his subordinates rest if he can help it and always expecting the utmost productivity from them; fortunately, Pallestrin is not afraid of hard work himself and is even willing to get involved in unpleasant affairs, particularly if he can smell an opportunity (as a recent example involving aboleths in the material plane indicates). Among the other Arch Ambassadors, Pallestrin is admired; neither Aurieas nor Visterial are fooled by his polite demeanor and do their best to keep on his good side. He excels at double talk that Espionage agents respect. Zapan is most impressed with Pallestrin as he has only recently pulled himself from what appeared to be a political slump. With his star on the rise, Pallestrin is not distracted by attempts to retire Zapan nor is he currently the target of any retirements. As such, he concentrates on strengthening deals with some of the most difficult parties in the Cosmos.

## Corps of the Heretics (General Visterial)

The Corps of the Heretics tends to deal with creatures with whom the Legions have common cause. For the most part, the divisions within this corps interact with creatures (usually spirits) that Hell finds amendable and the closest to allies they have against The Abyss. The use of infernal contracts are common occurrence, though, as neither side really trusts the other to hold to all agreements. It is interesting to note that the devils consider a number of axiomatic spirits to be relatively close allies... Once the conflict with The Abyss is over, the devils will move to correct the miseducation of their allies' heretical perspectives by revealing the full glory of Hell. In any case, the Corps of Heretics has six companies of Espionage Branch of Infiltration agents attached to it.

**The Amber Division:** A division that has experienced recent growth and importance, the Amber Division serves as ambassadors to the formians. Considered a cushy assignment, deals are relatively easy to make with the expansionist exemplars and tend revolve around opportunities for the axiomatic spirits to settle areas dominated by Chaotic beings, particularly those under demonic siege. Rarely do the devils bother to set agreements down on the infernal parchments; both parties are more than willing to keep their end of the deal. Both sides are comfortable with traditional contracts, which are filled with numerous foot notes and end notes. To date, the devils have not attempted to outwit the formians as they suspect that these spirits will soon become the dominant representatives of Nirvana. Diplomacy is the skill of choice in the Amber Division. Fallen angels have historically been better received by the formians, likely due to the time the spirits occupied Arcadia.

**The Iron Division:** An extremely important division, the Iron Corps is responsible for modron relations. In the past when modrons were dominant spirits of Nirvana, their favorable responses from them were valuable to Hell's activities in the war effort. Now, the modrons find themselves competing with the formians for more of Hell's attentions, giving the devils greater access to modron information and support. Historically, the devils simply pointed the modrons in the direction of Chaos and let them do their work. Now, the devils actively seek to recruit modron assistance in their endeavors, thereby reducing diabolical losses. In return, the devils do what they can to redirect formian interests away from the modrons (while ensuring that, in the long run, both axiomatic spirits encounter a stalemate from which Hell can benefit). Thus far, the modrons, eager to regain their primacy in Nirvana, have allowed this recent development... although it is anyone's guess as to how long they will continue this venture. Straightforward and mutually beneficial, devils in this division tend to have above average ranks in Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive. Until recently, this division was generally manned by the dullest of devils who had not managed to anger someone enough to get stationed in the Emerald Division. Now, it is considered a prized assignment. Fallen angels are found here in great abundance. The modrons appreciate the superficial appearance of goodness as a shell for vile evil.

**The Ruby Division:** One of the most highly desired divisions, the Ruby Division concentrates its efforts with the treat with the efreet and other evil denizens of the Reality of Fire; they also contact the gods of Hell. Almost as cruel and opportunistic as devils, efreet make for staunch allies. Several Dukes of Hell have their own personal dealings with the City of Brass and often will put Ruby Division diplomats up in their own embassies while they are on missions to the Reality of Fire. Minister Zapan is meticulous in ensuring that favors are given and retained on a fairly even basis so that his Denomination is not found too greatly in the debt of any particular Duke. Despite the general good will between devils and efreet, neither side is dumb enough not to advocate the use of infernal contracts. The City of Brass offers much opportunity for devils, if they are canny enough to avail themselves of it. Another frequent contact are the servants of Imix, the Lord of Unholy Flame; while meetings with the archontal are rare, a former 1<sup>st</sup> circle pit fiend general of Strategy and current proxy to Imix, Asgeroth, routinely sits with his former kin in meetings with Hell's ambassadors. Recently, this division has expanded dealings with the salamanders. Interestingly enough, the Nemesis of the Heavens, Eblis, does not receive frequent calls from this corps. Possibly the strongest arch-devil unassociated with Hell, Eblis frowns upon Hell's Hierarchy. Still, Eblis never overlooks opportunities to embarrass the Sarim and the Ruby Corps always reports such possibilities to the Arch-Devil of Fire, particularly when asked to do so by the Corps of the Angelic Choirs. This branch receives a great deal of information through Zapan and Visterial from Martinet, the Voice of Asmodeus, in order to facilitate arrangements with the gods of Hell. Diplomacy and Gather Information are the most vital skills for the division.

**General Visterial (7<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, rogue 7/sorcerer 7/wilder 7):** Visterial considers himself to be the most talented diplomat in Hell due to his long tenure as the Arch Ambassador of Heretics. He is well known by his

# The Dark Ministry

## The Six Chapters

various constituents and is frequently invited to attend them; indeed, he has more embassies in his branch than the other two Arch Ambassadors combined. He also has more Espionage operatives at his beck and call, a testament to the importance of his position. Despite Visterial's high opinion of himself, the reason for his perpetual position is that Zapan thinks him a fool and would rather not transfer him to become another Minister's problem (which is really to avoid making enemies among his peers than any consideration of being ethical). Visterial is a blowhard who makes foolish comments that give too much information. When dealing with lowly spirits in the past, this was not a problem, but among powerful beings like efreet or high caste formians and modrons, this can be devastating. It is for this reason that intelligence funneled to him is always skewed. Given that he ultimately allows his Imperial Ambassadors to handle most contacts, they are the ones who receive the proper information. Unfortunately for them, Zapan has grown accustomed to Visterial's stupidity and finds it an effective means to lull Hell's "allies" into a sense of complacency. Until Zapan is tired of Visterial's foolishness, no forced retirements will occur.

### The Corps of the Lost (General Auerias)

Devils have always been aware of the need to interact with creatures that seems to either have little to offer them or else could become grave risks to their goals. Thus, rather than allow a relative unknown to grow into a potential problem, the Corps of the Lost actively interacts with creatures that have either been thorns in Hell's side or are scheduled for liquidation once Hell defines Evil. Responsibilities in these divisions are either punishment or training opportunities as they are looked down upon by most diplomats. This corps has three companies of Espionage Branch of Infiltration agents attached to it.

*The Brass Division:* Another large and diverse division, Brass operatives address the concerns of most other immortal races that are not perceived to have a great impact on Hell's interests. A Brass Division diplomat may start the year interacting with undead in the Plane of Oblivion (or anywhere for that matter), making arrangements with ice elementals in the middle of the year, and then find himself dealing with fey creatures by year's end. This is often a division for beginners as it forces diplomats to spend time learning about all the other blasphemous creatures that fester in the Cosmos. Bluff and Diplomacy are the most important skills in Brass.

*The Emerald Division:* Surprisingly, devils find reason to engage in talks with the slaadi of Limbo and do so through the Emerald Division. The devils of this division are often placed here as punishment for minor failures and this is a particularly distasteful assignment. After all, pacts and slaadi seem incompatible with each other. Nevertheless, the Emerald Division does its best to direct slaadi violence and interference into The Abyss and away from Hell; barring that, they offer opportunities for entanglement with daemons and, if absolutely necessary, with axiomatics and the hashmallim choir of angels. Intimidate is the priority skill in this division, as the slaadi care little if they are lied to and rarely sign any actual contracts. Only putting the fear of Hell into them encourages anything useful out of the spirits of Chaos.

**General Auerias (6<sup>th</sup> circle 30 HD pit fiend, mind-bender 9):** Despite the fact that he is forced to oversee the least attractive diplomatic envoys, General Auerias takes his position and duties very seriously. He has worked hard

to make the best out of his difficult contacts, particularly with the Emerald Division and their slaadi contacts. Auerias hopes that his successes, which have been steady in appearance, will earn him an opportunity to transfer to the Corps of Heretics. Auerias is not as strong-willed as Visterial though, and certainly not as imposing or dynamic as Pallestrin, limiting his leadership ability. He has been relatively slow to truly improve the productivity of his staff (he prefers indoctrination sessions to simply beating or demoting them), and thus has not truly impressed Zapan. If Auerias does not learn how to become a more effective leader, he may find himself in a situation paralleling that of Visterial.

### **Diplomatic Branch of Informal Contacts (Generals Cartellic, Sarmel, Xalric)**

Despite expectations to the contrary, devils go out of their way to maintain open lines of communication with their historical foes, angels and demons. Although this puts such devils at great risk, the opportunities more than make up for this as the information and potential short-term alliances may have significant impacts Hell's maneuvers in the *Blood War*. The diplomats of this branch seek to play their constituents against each other and possibly against threats from other cosmic beings.

There are three corps within this branch, each dedicated to one of the more troublesome spiritual groups. The Corps of The Abyss is by far the best known and celebrated as it often means that a devil has to place himself in situations that could mean its destruction. The other corps, that of the Angelic Choirs (often referred to as the Celestial Cacophony), is only slight less regarded than that of The Abyss as it is typically more predictable. The final corps is by far the most dangerous and, in the eyes of Zapan, the most important: the Corps of the Divine. With so many gods in existence with an interest, however informal, in the resolution of the *Blood War* and the activities of the Denomination of Mortal Relations, meetings with divine proxies and the occasional god can result in an entire platoon of devils being wiped out of existence in scant seconds.

### The Corps of the Angelic Choirs (General Sarmel)

In Hell, the only spirits devils detest more than demons are angels. Regardless of choir, angels are universally despised and it takes a great deal for most devils not to pursue their natural inclination to find the means to bring angels low. Unlike demons, who often just want to rip an angelic being into motes of weeping light, devils seek to restructure the soul of angels, painfully contorting their nature into a perverse moral reflection of what they represent. It is unsurprising, then, that so many fallen angels have found their way into the Nine Hells of Perdition rather than The Abyss for, although Hell is certainly Evil, the aspect of order, the rationalization inherent in the diabolical, is tempting to many angels. However, devils fail far more than myths and legends suggest in the temptation of angelic beings. Even the weakest angel is typically far too wise and too committed to its cause to be misled by any but the most manipulative devil.

Most diplomatic ventures between angels and devils are carried out in secret and usually in a remote location in the Mortal Coil or in the Concordant Opposition of the Outlands (rarely in Sigil where there are too many prying eyes). The choir most likely to treat with devils is the

tarshishim, the angels that dominate Elysium. The benefit of treating with the tarshishim is that they will evaluate the information on offer looking at both the potential to disrupt or quash evil of some sort against the need to keep the Celestial Compact against celestial incursions into the Mortal Coil and beyond. Information that requires a strike which seems likely to disrupt the Compact is usually referred by the tarshishim agent to an angel of the ophanim (Chaotic Good) Choir to act on (often with a supporting "impartial observer" from the tarshishim along for the ride). The "impartial observer" would be deliberately chosen as someone to whom the ophanim involved would benefit from the advice of; that observer can then help channel the energies of the "strike team" into methods that are less overt in breaking the compact. While it is no surprise that the ophanim of Arborea never have anything to do with devils in a united capacity (they hate devils possibly more than demons), many are shocked to learn that the Lawful Good hashmallim also avoid dealing with devils, although the reason for this – beyond their hatred for what the fiends represent – is unclear. When the hashmallim do consent to working with the Corps of the Angelic Choirs, they also have a very clear goal in mind and always include an impartial observer in the form of at least one tarshishim. In any case, the Angelic Choirs never agree to sign any contracts; the devils do not push for such as they know that angels are disgustingly true to the letter and spirit of any verbal agreement. Unfortunately for the devils, this also means that they have to work very hard at getting an angel, especially one of the hashmallim, to make such an agreement. So far, most devils have not had the extreme displeasure of getting agreements from ophanim, who are wont to change their minds on any agreement they feel is not going to help promote good in the long run (and since they do not believe any good can really come from interaction with devils, routinely break agreements as soon as the devils come through with their part of the deal).

This begs the question as to why angels bother to have informal ties with devils. The answer is simple enough: opportunities to sway fallen brethren back into the Light. Zapan often has a few fallen angels appear as attendants to the true diplomats, and their presence has a profound impact on the proceedings. In the past, only 5% of diplomatic envoys with angels met with success from the devils. As soon as Zapan came upon the idea to include one or two fallen angels in such meetings, success tripled. This success has come at a price, though: quite a few fallen angels are redeemed and welcomed back into the fold upon the completion of the proper penance. Initially, Zapan reacted to these events magnanimously as he figured the gains were worth the reduction in staff; however, he has recently learned through Espionage that many of these fallen angels were either double agents themselves or else might as well have been upon redemption. Furthermore, angels – while never liars – are often three steps ahead of Zapan's typical diplomats, often coming out well ahead of the devils in the final picture. Zapan is currently reevaluating the inclusion of fallen angels as a lure to the Angelic Choirs. For now, he only allows angels who have fallen no later than the *Great Fall* to have high level clearance into the Denomination and only sends those who have fallen within the past millennia as enticements.

Bluff and Diplomacy are the most important skills for angelic diplomats; many take feats in Negotiator and Persuasive to improve their chances and wear magical enhancements as well. In recent centuries, quite a few angelic diplomats have started taking ranks in Sense Motive.

Most of the agents are rogues (as the angels react poorly to clerics or wizards). This corps is dominated by erinyes and pit fiends among the devils and has the highest concentration of fallen angels in the entire Ministry.

**General Sarmel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 28 HD unknown outsider, hierophant 5/high proselytizer 10):** It is said that Sarmel is not a true devil, but a fallen angel (usually thought to be a planetar) that has taken the shape of a pit fiend when in Hell. Whether a devil true or a fallen angel, Sarmel is an ancient creature who has dwelled in Hell since before even the Voyeurs arrived. However, as befitting her station, she does not believe that Hell is Evil. Rather, she believes that all else in Creation is an illusion and that Hell is the only reality, the only Truth. The Cosmos needs Order and since Order can never be achieved without the promise of purging pain and the oppression of individuality, the Cosmos needs Hell. A former ally of Murmer, the Duke of Philosophy, Sarmel never shouts and exudes the calm of an angelic figure; however, there is a miasma of vile evil about her that she takes pains to conceal when meeting with her angelic counterparts. Indeed, when meeting with the Angelic Choirs, Sarmel appears as the planetar she is thought to be and always includes a few recently fallen angels in her retinue. As one of the oldest serving entities in the Ministry, Sarmel is highly respected by Zapan. She has no interest in his position and has worked well with all Ministers of Immortal Diplomacy. Sarmel's ultimate goal is to become a senior general in the Denomination of Morale, preferable Indoctrination. For eons, her attempts for a transfer have been rebuffed as Zimimar has never been able to determine her true form and Sarmel herself is said not to know anymore. If her attempts to transfer continue to fail, Sarmel hopes to be approached by either the Duke of Logic, Caim, or her old ally Murmer into the Courtiers of Perdition. Given her success and the relative comfort the Angelic Choirs have with her, it is likely that Zapan would step in to stifle any such offers. For their part, the Angelic Choirs' interest in Sarmel is in determining her true nature. If she is truly an angel, they hope to learn her background in order to determine how far back the first angel fell and what instigated it.

#### The Corps of The Abyss (General Cartellic)

The most frustrating thing for the devils of this corps is having to deal with the apparently infinite demonic groups. With countless unique demons, thousands of demon lords, and scores of demon princes, there is not one diplomatic approach in dealing with The Abyss and even established arrangements can and do change at a moments notice. As a result, there are countless divisions in the corps which, at any time, may be eliminated if a demon suddenly disappears or terminates its arrangements with Hell (usually by destroying a number of diabolical diplomats). Unlike their peers in other Denominations, the devils of this corps have long since learned to respect the intelligence of demons. While demons may not be as clever as devils, they are every bit as conniving and much faster than devils in leaps of intuition, making it difficult to establish deals with them without persistent use of confounding logic and steadfastness.

Another fact that this corps has determined is that while there are certainly many more demons involved in the *Blood War* than devils, the vast majority of demons have their interests elsewhere. For the demons in the demons in the *Blood War*, there are often vying groups sometimes based upon different unique demons and demon lords or

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## Chapter Six

else upon something completely unrelated. It is through this animosities that the devils apply leverage in order to gain information or win a pivotal battle. Furthermore, the fact that there are so many demons uninvolved in active fighting prompt the agents of this corps to do all they can to keep them out. Whether this means providing information on a hated rival or setting up situations that lead to the destruction of a demon prince through divine or angelic incursions, this corps is willing to do anything within the bounds of order to limit more demonic forces entering the war effort.

There are a number of demon factions with whom the devils have routine dealings. The Demon Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms, Pazuzu, is a prominent figure. His servants have historically kept out of the *Blood War* since he would rather strengthen his own standing across the Depths Below. The War is a troublesome distraction to this endeavor. Pazuzu is the only demon prince known to offer a safe haven to devils in The Abyss, although the price for such aid is high (so far, the Denomination of Morale continues to accept that devils that take advantage of his aid are not infected with the demonic, but still insist on 1001 day long Indoctrination sessions after such occurrences). Another demon with whom this corps has routine dealings is the marquis half-fiend known as Rule-of-Three. Supposedly a son of the Dark Prince of The Abyss, Graz'zt, Rule-of-Three agrees with his leader that the Depths Below would be better served united than not. Although the devils do not trust Rule-of-Three one wit, they have acquired a great deal of consistently valuable information from the half-demon even if this information has weakened Graz'zt's personal enemies.

Bluff, Intimidate, and Sense Motive are the most important skills for members of this dangerous corps to take. The regular display of great power, often physical punctuated by magical, is needed to impress upon demons the stupidity in betraying diabolical diplomats and the ability to read the mercurial natures of demons is central to success in the corps. Feats like Negotiator and Persuasive are important, although Quicken Spell-like Ability (*greater teleport*) is a given considering the regularity (33%) of betrayals shortly after a meeting beings. Most of the devils in this corps are greater devils, gelugons and pit fiends dominating the ranks. Many have levels in cleric, fighter, and wizard and most are multi-classed.

**General Cartillic (7<sup>th</sup> circle 25 pit fiend HD 10 black-guard/10 planar champion):** Arch Ambassador Cartillic is the latest in a long line of Arch Ambassadors to The Abyss. Despite the superb precautions the devils have taken over the centuries, the demons consistently come up with ingenious ways to assassinate the Arch Ambassadors, often at the peak of some great agreement. While Cartillic is not the longest served Arch Ambassador, he has maintained his position and his existence longer than most. Clever and capable of analyzing, if not understanding, the Chaos in which demons revel, Cartillic has avoided six demonic plots and has even been able to establish a few somewhat trustworthy arrangements with some marilith generals (with whom Cartillic can converse the most successfully since they think strategically and tactically). Cartillic often uses information from Espionage and from the Ebon Division of Ambassadorial Relations to supplement his dealings with demons. Knowing that demons put little to no stock in agreements for their own sake, he is always certain to have some valuable and important information to offer that the demons are willing to wait until

after a deal concludes successfully for both sides. Cartillic is one of the few pit fiends to have traveled to The Abyss and back alive not involved in a battle. These successes and traits have made Cartillic a target of a Morale probe; to date, no incriminating evidence has been found to implicate him of treason or demonic influence. The truth is that Cartillic is far more zealous of Hell's position than most pit fiends and his certainty of Perdition's superiority is what allows him to ignore the influence of Chaos. Indeed, he has personally destroyed many of his own troops whom he grew suspicious of. Still, Cartillic remains under investigation, one of which he is unaware.

### The Corps of the Divine (General Xalric)

Possibly the most dangerous corps in the Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy, the Corps of the Divine is a place where only devils seeking a fast track to power find great interest. This corps serves as a go-between for the Denomination of Mortal Relations when mortal souls are at stake or when the devils are seeking divine aid (or the lack of interference) in the Depths Below during battles against demons. Like the demons, there are many vying parties involved; good gods are rarely engaged and when they are, the corps routinely asks for the assistance of their brethren in the Corps of the Angelic Choir. Likewise, Chaotic Evil gods may require aid from the Corps of The Abyss.

Historically, both demons and devils have sought to keep the gods out of the *Blood War* and most gods are content to let the fiends fight. Still, the devils know that the gods have a stake in the outcome as there are plenty of Lawful Good gods that detest demons and would love little more than to have one-third of the fiend problem removed even if that means unofficial alliances with Hell. However, the devils have to be cautious in these arrangements as gods, capable of seeing through even the most elaborate plans, have been known to annihilate the participants of summits, including their own worshippers (who they can return to life if they so please). There are often no warnings or inclination of such events. Additionally, the devils of this corps have to contend with the fact that most gods see very real little difference between the Dark Ministry and the Lords of the Nine. Most gods willing to do business with the Corps of the Divine hope to get something out of the rulers of Hell (often a soul); although Zapan does have open lines of communication to Martinet to reach any of the Lords, he knows that the Lords have probably already turned down offers from gods seeking an audience. Upon discovering that the diplomats from Hell are of no use, devils consider it a gift if they make it back to Hell alive. In any event, devils are still certain to request the signing of contracts for any agreements that are reached. Such contracts are usually delivered sealed in person by Duke Martinet, which suggests that a Lord of the Nine – possibly even Asmodeus – writes them. Most gods are informed well in advance that they will be asked to sign a contract, thereby reducing the possibility of offense when the deal is ready to close. Such contracts are binding in a way that transcends even the best written infernal contract since devils are hardly in the position to track down the god for failing to follow through. To date, not even Zapan knows what failure to meet the stipulations of a divine contract means as no god that has signed one has abandoned his part of the bargain.

In recent years, Zapan has made it policy to meet with divine proxies rather than with avatars and then only at the base of the Spire in the Concordant Opposition of the Outlands where divine power is nullified. This policy adjust-

ment has greatly increased the survival rate of the corps agents. It is important to note that the gods of Hell are not handled by this corps but by the Ruby Division of the Branch of Ambassadorial Relations. However, it is this corps that deals with the Lords of the Nine.

Diplomacy and Sense Motive are the most important skills for this corps (Bluff is worthless as most gods immediately see right through lies and have not compunction against punishing those stupid enough to lie to them). Feats that enhance these skills are par for the course. Like the Corps of the Angelic Choirs, the most common class here is the rogue; pit fiend commanders usually send high level squamugons to parlay with divine proxies rather than risk their own skins.

**General Xalric (6<sup>th</sup> circle 37 HD pit fiend cleric 1/contemplative 5):** Xalric is a brash, confident pit fiend. One of the more powerful pit fiends, it is often thought that he may actually be a Nessian. Physically huge, only a few pit fiends, notably The Ashmadia, are larger than him. He is also incredibly insightful, something most do not expect after meeting him. His assignment as the Arch Ambassador of the Divine was in part due to his capturing all that is represented by Hell: great physical strength and impressive intellect. Xalric has served in a number of capacities in the Ministry, the most notable being Mortal Relations, Morale, and (unsurprisingly) Strategy. So far, this has been his most fulfilling assignment. Although brave, Xalric has a healthy respect (fear would be too strong a word) for gods. While he does not think gods are worthy of worship, he understands that they feel differently and that some have no problem violently expressing their displeasure with those that feel otherwise. As such, Xalric knows how to flatter them without coming across as pathetic. In his meetings with high level proxies, Xalric keeps abreast of all religious rites, performing those that are not excessively righteous or chaotic in order to clarify his interest in achieving relations beneficial to all sides. Still, he will not treat with those unwilling to offer their own humility. Xalric's ultimate goal is to become the next Minister of Immortal Diplomacy. Despite his respect for Zapan, he believes that he has a better grasp of the divine, something that he believes has an influence all aspects of the Denomination's responsibilities. To date, Zapan has not recognized the envy in Xalric's eyes as the latter has long since learned how to conceal his true intent from gods. However, Xalric's fate may be to enter into the Court of Nessus as Martinet is impressed with him.

#### Diplomatic Branch of Military Coordination (Generals Baalberith, Gresticas, Lisstel)

The Diplomatic Branch of Military Coordination underwrites all contracts that involve the deployment of troops on the part of other immortal beings (including singular cosmic or divine assaults from cosmic entities and gods). In addition, the branch tenders language for surrenders (a responsibility rarely acted upon), and takes pains to make sure that allied troops are not subject to friendly fire (unless part of a plan).

It is typical that many diplomatic ventures get off track, resulting in final decisions that were not part of the Legion's intent. Usually, these occurrences can be addressed with later diplomatic gatherings. Such is not the case when contracts involving troop deployment to support Hell's actions are the end goal. Thus, before any final contract is

established, Military Coordination reviews the language to make sure that both parties (but especially Hell) are in complete understanding as to what the responsibilities are. If military action is not part of contract, most corps draft their own contracts in order to have greater direct control and immediate attention to the matter. However, in recent years, the Ebon Division of the Ambassadorial Relations Corps of Blasphemers has included Military Coordination in *all* arrangements made with the daemons (the Emerald Corps has considered doing the same in their dealings with the slaadi, but quickly abandoned the idea since the slaadi are as prone to signing and adhering to contracts as they are to eating them, lighting them on fire, or defecating on them). In this task, the Branch of Military Coordination often finds it useful to work with the Espionage Branch of Infiltration and has a brigade of such devils attached to them.

Part of all such contracts includes clauses on compensation for any troop loss due to friendly fire. The language here is also clear that friendly fire is based upon immortal troops fulfilling their mission successfully. It is not unusual for devils who are about to be overrun by demonic forces due to allied failure to turn on such troops in retaliation for not fulfilling their obligations.

Another aspect of Military Coordination is that they provide military support to all diplomatic ventures. Embassies are staffed with troops from this branch, meeting places are evaluated for safety and guarded by this branch, and high level ambassadors receive protection from this branch. As needed, Military Coordination will request supplemental troops from Strategy, although such rarely occurs.

Devil populations in this branch closely mirror that of Strategic Branch of Land.

**General Baalberith (7th circle 31 HD, cleric 4 warpriest 10):** General Baalberith was once a general in Strategy and the manner in which he oversees Military Coordination reflects this. He runs everything in a cold, military fashion. There are no short cuts, but efficiency and precision are essential. Baalberith perceives his role as the Chief Military Coordinator as a failsafe to the weaklings in the other Diplomatic branches. Not only does he ensure quality control, he also oversees the defenses of all embassies and all envoys led by one of the Arch or Imperial Ambassadors. Baalberith typically accompanies Zapan to any summit the Dark Minister attends, and personally oversee the security details. His subordinates fear him tremendously as he is not above sending them to meetings with daemons or demons he knows are expected to become hostile. Baalberith often finds that he has to work closely with Retya, Dagos' attaché, a situation he enjoys as he once reported to Retya in the distant past. Baalberith also receives most reports from Espionage. Still, Baalberith wants more. So far as he is concerned, Military Coordination should be the focal point of all Diplomatic efforts as the Legions of Hell are about promoting the reeducation of the Cosmos by beating them into submission, not talk. Baalberith believes that the time will come when he will be forced to pull the reins of leadership from Zapan. He has wisely not made his dissatisfaction known.

**General Gresticas (6<sup>th</sup> circle 25 HD pit fiend, blackguard 10/marshal 10):** Gresticas serves as the Military Coordination Liaison. While Baalberith addresses the big picture, Gresticas tends to the daily operations, making

sure that embassies are fully supplied and that any need to request additional troops are made. Careful and observant, Gresticas suspects his superior's displeasure and agrees with him. Gresticas believes that harsher language needs to be used with the various spiritual agencies with whom Hell stoops to interact. However, he understands the need for occasional give-and-take. He hopes to become an Arch Ambassador in order to show Zapan how it is done before returning as the Chief Military Coordinator whether or not Baalberith has carried out his own promotion.

**General Lisstel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 20 HD pit fiend, arcane trickster 11/rogue 4/sorcerer 4):** Lisstel supervises the contracts for the entire Denomination if troop deployment becomes part of an arrangement. He also handles all treaties signed by Hell. He works very closely with Baalberith and Zapan in both regards. Lisstel has a flair for the dramatic that often finds its way into his contracts. Indeed, this is one of the reasons Zapan placed him as the Chief Military Underwriter. Lisstel has found the means to always reflect Hell's superiority in the contracts he write and has routinely finds the means to slip in language that could be taken to mean any number of things more beneficial to Hell than to the other party. While Lisstel does not expect many such attempts to be successful, the fact that 25% have been over his long tenure in his position has garnered him a very strong reputation in the Denomination. Lisstel hopes to eventually relocate to the Denomination of Supply where he can put his contract writing skills to excellent use.

### Infernal Denomination of Morale (Dark Minister Zimimar)

#### Branches

*Indoctrination* – Spreads the doctrines of the Ministry through literature to the uninitiated (propaganda and demoralizing tactics against the enemy).

*Medical* – handles the restoration of wounded soldiers.

*Truth* – processes those slated for reeducation (prisoners of war), provides reeducation (interrogation and brain-washing), and ensures the loyalty and cooperation of internal troops.

#### Generals

*Indoctrination* – Destrom, Ignymiel, Sinhist

*Medical* – Krelt, Neperiel, Y'Zelrel

*Truth* – Ariyan, Gazra, Vhesage

"No one is innocent." This is the motto of the Infernal Denomination of Morale, the most feared of the eight ministries of the Legions of Hell, and one of the most powerful. With its talons deep into the husks of the other Denominations, the devils of Morale are arguably the most zealous not just in the Denomination, but in Hell at large. They are convinced that Hell offers the only right way and believe that only they can ensure that none, especially other devils, ever forget this fact. Unfortunately for the other devils, the agents of Morale do not believe that most adhere to this truth.

Morale is committed to the well-being of the Legions. Although they are better known for their police and spying agents within the Ministry, the Denomination also provides the necessary healing attention to all Blood Warriors. Far more important than "physical" health, though, is the health of the diabolical soul and this is where the greatest

percentage of the Denomination's efforts go. Whether through the Branch of Indoctrination or Truth, the agents of Morale are routinely evaluating their fellows for proper behavior. They spend their time gathering evidence of behavior and thoughts contrary to the will of Hell. In some ways, poor thoughts are worse than behavior as the act of concealment is considered a more severe crime as it can infect more devils before the perpetrator is found and dealt with.

The devils of Morale do not get along well with any other Denomination, although they work the closest with Espionage and Promotion. Morale and Espionage often find that their duties overlap, particularly when dealing with matters related to Hell's nobility. Although Morale has no jurisdiction over the Courtiers of Perdition, most accusations of treason in those ranks are discovered after a Morale agent pulls information from a common devil associated with the noble but working for the Legions. The fact that Morale must turn such cases to Espionage is considered an insult. Furthermore, Morale is not convinced that the double-agents of Espionage can act as demons so well to avoid detection without actually becoming demons themselves. As such, Morale conducts extremely regular and invasive evaluations of Espionage agents, a frustration to the senior officers of that Denomination.

The bulk of devils that work in Morale are hamatulas, kocrachons, and osyluths; erinyes are typically found as officers in Indoctrination. The bulk of the greater devils are cornugons and pit fiends, although the 9999 battalions of gelugons in the Truth Branch of Morale are among the best known devils in Hell.

Morale and Promotion work very closely in order to determine which devils are the most fit for promotion. The problem is that Morale does not believe that bribery has any place in the decision making process and that the devils of Promotion are little better than daemons in their behavior. Unfortunately for Morale, the Dark Ministers (save Zimimar of course) prefer the current establishment as they believe that the bribery and competition among relatives equals reveals those most capable of proving themselves. However, Zimimar is growing ever more suspicious of Promotion and is slowly filling their ranks with spies.

### The Medical Branch of Morale (Generals Krelt, Neperiel, Y'Zelrel)

The Medical Branch of Morale is unlike any institution bearing a similar name in the Mortal Coil. Patients are not seen as victims or unfortunate, but as lazy irresponsible fools. An infernal infirmary is not a relaxing environment for a devil. They are expected to heal quickly and return to their stations.

Most medical troops are clerics, usually with the War and Law domains. Most, if not all, combat clerics worship Hell (in truth, they worship The Overlord). The remaining medical troops are various devils with the Heal skill. The branch is broken up into battalion level medic groups and large field hospitals.

The average medic group is a platoon serving a regiment, each squad being attached to a battalion. All members of these groups are clerics. A field hospital also has normal devils with ranks in Heal. These devils evaluate the patients to determine what their needs. Many are sent away with just a *potion of cure moderate wounds*. The more serious cases are tended to by an actual cleric. Any

devil that has not lost enough hit points to be allowed to withdraw (as described in the Denomination of Strategy) is reported to the Truth Branch of Morale for further evaluation.

Generals have their own personal medics, usually a captain for a 1<sup>st</sup> circle general. The branch heads have a 3<sup>rd</sup> circle general tending to their needs and each Minister has a 4<sup>th</sup> circle general. Like their personal mystic defense entourage, these medics are near their charge at all times.

Sergeants must be capable of casting second level spells, master sergeants must cast third level spells, and sergeant majors must be able to cast fifth level. Spellcasting requirements are similar among commissioned officers: lieutenants must be able to cast third level spells and each successive rank must be capable of casting a higher level spell than the last, culminating with 1<sup>st</sup> circle generals casting at minimum seventh level spells. A 5<sup>th</sup> circle general is capable of casting ninth level spells. Due to the stringent requirements and demands for a high cleric level throughout the branch, lesser devils such as erinyes and narzugon often hold the higher officer ranks. While only pit fiends (with very few exceptions) can be ranked as generals, an erinyes that meets the prerequisites for the position can be invested with the authority of the rank. Throughout the branch, they are referred to by their actual rank followed by "general"; thus, an erinyes major who could cast 7<sup>th</sup> level spells would be called major general.

Interestingly, there are more kocrachons serving in Medical than in any other branch save Truth. They are charged with doing on the spot demotions for those too pathetic to return to service. The upper ranks are dominated by cornugons and pit fiends. Most devils recuperate as swiftly as possible in order to avoid the bed-side manners of Medical troops.

**General Neperiel (7<sup>th</sup> circle, Order of the Bleeding Blade, 23 HD pit fiend, cleric 5/12 mystic theurge/wizard (necromancer) 5):** The Chief Medical Officer of the Legions of Hell, General Neperiel has few of the attributes most mortals would expect from a doctor. Cold, cruel, and only interested in the amount of pain a patient suffers in order to sate his own curiosities, Neperiel is far closer to an arcane researcher in his attitudes... Unsurprising consider that he spent considerable time in the Denomination of Research in Experimental. Prior to that, Neperiel was a member of Prince Lixer's court where he was considered one of the more talented necromancers. The cause of his departure remains unclear (some whisper that he challenged His Infernal Highness to a mystic duel and lost), but his skills continue to impress the Dark Ministry. Neperiel despise weakness and expects his troops to despise it as well. If a devil is too weak to recuperate without significant help from Medical, the devil is not worth saving and should be demoted to leumure status to start anew. In a way, this attitude has drawn the ire of Minister Zaebos who does not appreciate so many demotions occurring in one branch that affects all Denominations. So far, though, Zimimar has not ordered Neperiel to stop as she believes that his behavior is beneficial to the overall morale of the Legions. Oddly, some of Neperiel's greatest allies are in the upper echelons of Strategy as Dagos and his senior generals agree with Neperiel's stance on troop availability. Neperiel continues to have allies in Research, but is strongly disliked elsewhere, especially Promotions. He works very well with Krelt and Y'Zelrel; although he knows both of them hope to unseat him, he also knows that they are as cruel and uncaring as he. Until one of them

makes a move, though, he has no intention of demoting them; however, he already has bought out their supposed allies and feels he has little to worry about from his subordinates.

**General Krelt (6<sup>th</sup> circle 21 HD pit fiend cleric 12/entropomancer 10):** Krelt, the Chief Combat Medical Officer, supervises the medical support exclusively for the Denominations of Espionage and Strategy, the two that experience the most frequent combats and injuries. This responsibility differs from Y'Zelrel's as Krelt does not assign medical teams to generals or serve as a liaison to branches. Rather, Krelt sees to it that general medical needs are met in the field for all soldiers. Like his superior officer, Neperiel, Krelt has little patience for weakness. Knowing that most devils can regenerate, the only ones he expects his troops to encounter are those suffering from non-regenerating wounds that expect to go back into battle immediately. All others have a stipend of healing potions to which they have access each year (typically one *potion of cure critical wounds* per every two hit dice). Once this ration is used, the devil in question risks severe treatment at the hands of Krelt's troops, if not demotion. Krelt respects Neperiel and Y'Zelrel. He considers them to be superb soldiers. He also considers them to be in his way, particularly Y'Zelrel. Due to his role, Krelt spends more time afield than Y'Zelrel which, he fears, makes it more difficult for him to retire Neperiel. Krelt, who used to find opportunities to eliminate Neperiel, has recently shifted his focus to his colleague instead. What he does not know is that Y'Zelrel has done the same.

**General Y'Zelrel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 25 HD pit fiend favored soul 7/hospitaler 10):** As the Medical Liaison, Y'Zelrel oversees the deployment of platoon support to all Denominations except Espionage and Strategy; he is also responsible for the assignment of medical support to the generals of the Legions. Despite what some would think, Y'Zelrel does not play favorites in these assignments; indeed, those that have attempted to bribe him either found themselves being retired by their medical support or else under investigation by the Branch of Truth. Y'Zelrel is universally hated by the generals, although only a few are foolish enough not to respect him. Y'Zelrel also serves as the chief operations officer for the Medical Branch which requires that he work closely with Neperiel. Y'Zelrel likes his superior officer and considers Krelt to be an able soldier and colleague; he also likes both of their positions. Until recently, Y'Zelrel was searching for opportunities to retire Neperiel but has recently shifted gears to the more accessible Krelt. He hopes that by eliminating Combat Medical Officer he will reveal to those willing to support him that he would be a more effective leader than Neperiel. It is unclear how successful Y'Zelrel has been in recruiting co-conspirators so far.

### The Morale Branch of Indoctrination (Generals Destrom, Ignymiel, Sinhist)

The Branch of Indoctrination is focused on the spiritual and/or mental (when dealing with half-fiends and mortal agents) well being of diabolical agents. They do everything within the strictures of Hell to impose the proper viewpoint from those that work towards the final victory of Perdition over The Abyss and eventually the entire Cosmos.

# The Dark Ministry

## Chapter Six

The Branch of Indoctrination spends the bulk of its time spreading proper exposure on the values of Hell and one's place in Perdition to the ranks of the Legions. This is not limited to the Nine Perditions as the responsibility of spreading accurate information on Hell often takes these devils beyond the confines of the Depths Below and into the Realms Above, between, and beyond into the Mortal Coil itself. The devils of Indoctrination spend their time writing Infernal Tracts. These tracts serve various functions; some are designed to question the value of righteousness and others seek to degrade the demonic while still others offer logical support for Hell's position and eventual rise to power. Infernal Tracts are never placed haphazardly across Creation, but based upon research completed by Espionage, Immortal Diplomacy, and Mortal Relations; tracts are always written and placed to perpetuate a certain attitude relevant to the target location. Many tyrannical philosophies have sprung up without direct diabolical participation in the Mortal Coil due to the Tracts, while angels have been known to lead strike forces against demons after being exposed to Tracts if they are unaware of their origins. Most Tracts are not magical, making tracing difficult.

Another aspect of Indoctrination is the focus on the diabolical soul, or "brainwashing" for want of a better word. All devils are required to undergo routine Indoctrination Evaluation. Devils typically do so once for every racial HD they possess in years; thus a hamatula would be evaluated once every 12 years and a cornugon would be evaluated once every 16 years. Most devils look forward to these sessions as they are reminded of their purpose. However, for some, these sessions are more invasive.

When agents of evaluation suspect they may be dealing with potentially traitorous devils too valuable to lose, they immediately enroll such devils into more intense sessions. These devils undergo varying degrees of evaluation, some simple (for devils) discussions to reveal the logic of Hell's hegemony; others are tortures more grotesque than those experienced anywhere else. Mortal agents of Hell are often taken by Indoctrination agents if they have already been swayed to Lawful Evil. Otherwise, Indoctrination never interferes with non-devils.

Most of the troops serving in Indoctrination are kochachons and osyluths, although there are smatterings of erinyses as well. Senior officers are mostly gelugons with pit fiends dominating the upper ranks. Most of these devils are highly advanced racially in their caste with few if any class levels; those with classes are usually Tract writer archivists, clerics, or loremasters. Tract writers often have high Bluff, Diplomacy, Forgery, and Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (religion) skills. Evaluators tend to have maxed out Bluff, Intimidate, and Sense Motive. Popular feats for both groups are Investigator and Persuasive.

**General Sinhist (7<sup>th</sup> circle 32 HD pit fiend cleric 6/dread inquisitor 7):** The Arch Indoctrinator, Sinhist is one of the older devils. Only the second devil to serve in his current role, Sinhist is patient, driven, and convinced of Hell's superiority and eventual victory and cannot understand why there is a *Blood War* in the first place as a result. Sinhist spent a brief time in Strategy, Mortal Relations, and – upon transferring to Morale – in Truth. These experiences have made Sinhist the ideal senior general in the Branch of Indoctrination as he understands the importance of spreading the good news of Hell in a variety of areas for a variety of audiences. Sinhist runs his branch with an iron fist; he does not accept nay-sayers nor does he appreciate

his decisions being questioned. Having gone through a number of immediate subordinates, he is relatively satisfied with Destrom and Ignymiel, who seem to understand that the only right way in Indoctrination is his way and his way is right because it is Hell's way. Sinhist expects all of his troops to undergo regular evaluation and routinely asks Vhesage to investigate his senior officers. While he is not particularly paranoid, Sinhist fears that any small slip in adhering to the proper diabolical standard can have an adverse impact on the manner in which evaluations are completed. Indoctrination is the most zealous group of devils in the senior ranks as a result of Sinhist's management. The only creatures Sinhist fears are the Dark Ministers (particularly Zimimar). He does not fear the Lords of the Nine; rather, he is in awe of them.

**General Destrom (6<sup>th</sup> circle 20 HD pit fiend virtuoso 10/warlock 10):** High Indoctrinator Destrom is responsible for infernal tract writing. He works closely with the Denominations of Espionage, Immortal Diplomacy, and Mortal Relations as a result and himself regularly travels to areas deemed important for his troops' works. Destrom sees himself as an artist of truth. He values the written word and the impact it can have. He loves to read, particularly religious texts. Unfortunately, Destrom is not the best writer; an excellent instructor, his passion has allowed him to find and train the most talented writers in Hell outside of the courts. Destrom has proven himself to be a team player and an excellent strategist, particularly when it comes to addressing mortal and angelic issues. It is possible that he will eventually be granted a transfer to Mortal Relations or even Immortal Diplomacy... That is if Sinhist allows it. The Arch Indoctrinator values Destrom highly and sees no reason why anyone would want to abandon Indoctrination unless the devil in question was a traitor. Zimimar is also not certain she wants to lose Destrom, although she suspects that a transfer to Mortal Relations may curry some favor from Furcas.

**General Ignymiel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 21 HD pit fiend psion 10/shadowmind 10):** As the Executive Officer of Indoctrination, Ignymiel oversees the assignment of evaluations and tends to the day-to-day spiritual health issues of the Legions of Hell. More visible than Sinhist, Ignymiel is not exactly feared, but most that encounter him do their best to reveal their dedication to Hell. Ignymiel personally tends to the evaluations of all 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals in Hell. He is committed to Hell so much, though, that he only uses the information he acquires against them if he feels they are a threat to Hell's inevitable victory. In such cases, he turns names over to Vhesage. Ignymiel is the closest thing to a "caring" devil among the senior generals in the Legions. He seems genuinely interested in the health of his peers. The wise know that this interest is in ensuring that there are enough powerful devils available to lead Hell to dominance over Creation and that Ignymiel would not think twice if a single devil died in pursuit and achievement of this glorious end. Ignymiel works well with Sinhist and perceived Destrom to be a valuable peer, although a bit theatrical. Ignymiel has no interest in promotion as he believes that only he can do a proper job in his current position.

**The Morale Branch of Truth  
(Generals Ariyan, Gazra, Vhesage)**

The troops of the Branch of Truth are those who watch the watchmen. They move with impunity throughout the Legions, arresting those who would betray Hell for their own selfish gains. They are fanatics of the highest order, completely dedicated to Hell and the perfection Perdition represents. They cannot be bargained with and are relentless in their pursuit for their version of truth.

Any that would break the Law of Hell are subject to arrest. A devil slipping towards Chaos or Good, even in the slightest, is the worst kind of traitor. Typical punishments for these kinds of crime are consignment to the Lake of Fire in Phlegethos for indeterminate amounts of time or, for those who have truly spat in the face of Hell, being cast in the Pit of Darkness for all eternity to be devoured by whatever lies within. Lesser punishments are reserved for those who would waste Hell's resources, fail through incompetence, speak against their superiors, or disobey orders. Punishments for negligence of this sort tend to be anything from a reprimand (a severe beating that would easily kill even mid-level mortals) to loss of rank (which includes the reprimand) to demotion (all the way down to lemure status).

While the police arrest and can punish for crimes like speaking against superiors and minor acts of theft, higher level crimes and those committed by gelugons and pit fiends are evaluated by the dread inquisitors for truth. Despite what most would expect, devils never punish for the sake of punishment and only create false evidence for those devils who have been marked by a Dark Minister. However, once a dread inquisitor is convinced of a devil's guilt, only the direct intervention of a Dark Minister or Asmodeus (and possibly another Lord of the Nine) will sway the verdict. Most dread inquisitors hold the rank of majors and are usually pit fiends, while advocates hold the rank of lieutenant and are often erinyes, severely deteriorating a not guilty verdict for the accused. The dread inquisitors also assume responsibility for the care and treatment of any prisoners of war captured. "Question and Answer" sessions are common, although some commands are better known for their successful conversion attempts. Many a demon has withered into a lemure after repeated indoctrination sessions with a zealous agent of the Branch of Truth.

While the military police and dread inquisitors work alongside generals, generals have no authority over them. Utterly independent, military police and dread inquisitors can initiate their own investigations and are under no compulsion to inform high ranking officials. Despite being zealots, both the police and inquisitors are still very aware of politics and typically keep generals to whom they are attached informed of most investigations and often lend their services to generals who request investigations. In return, the generals ensure that the police and inquisitors receive assistance and protection as needed. The distribution of police and inquisitors parallels that of medical. The typical military police grouping is a platoon serving the equivalent of a regiment, each squad being attached to the equivalent of a battalion. Typically a squad of inquisitors serves the equivalent of a brigade. While there are never military police serving as guards for a general, each 7<sup>th</sup> circle general has direct access to one 9<sup>th</sup> circle major dread inquisitor.

Another section within the Branch of Truth are the infernal agents, those that spy upon the others. These moles are among the most detested devils in Hell as they report any and all infractions, from the most minor misstep or mispronunciation to the gravest of offenses. These

moles are often not full-fledged members of the branch and are often already in a position to observe their marks when they are approached to work for Morale. Most moles, upon completion of their services, are rewarded by being cast into the Lake of Fire; those that survive for a year and a day are immediately promoted (pit fiends are made generals and given a special commendation and recommendation to the Courtiers of Perdition) while those that do not survive were clearly traitors themselves. In any case, the true infernal agents work relatively closely with the Infernal Denomination of Espionage to gather information on double agents.

Of the branches, that of Truth is unique in that it possesses direct ties to the Courts of Perdition, namely those of the Lords of the Nine. Through the Branch of Truth, all security details for the common locations throughout Hell are maintained. There are nine governors, although only three are accorded the rank of 8<sup>th</sup> circle generals. These three are the Overseers of Security and Truth in Hell; two supervise the military police for four layers, one is responsible for all inquisitors. Gazra maintains his offices in Abrimoch and manages security for Avernum, Dis, Minauros, and Phlegethos (particularly the Lake of Fire and Brimstone) while Ariyan is the governor of Tantlin and is charged with supervising Stygia (especially the River Styx), Malbolge, Maladomini, and Cania. Vhesage conducts her operations from Malsheem in Nessus although she has offices in each ducal city in Hell.

Osyluths, kocrachons, and hamatula make up the bulk of the lower tiers of this branch. Pit fiends are nearly the only greater devil found among the upper officer ranks, with a few cornugons. The devils of the Branch of Truth, particularly the osyluths, often have higher than normal Constitution and Strength scores. In most cases, pit fiend traitors are only arrested by other pit fiends. Such conflicts are terrible as pit fiends who have chosen to betray Hell seldom go quietly into the night.

Blackguards, rogues, and clerics are found here, as well as psions and wizards specializing in Divinations. Dread inquisitors are a variant of the church inquisitor (the *detect evil* ability is changed to *discern lies* at will, and the *discern lies* ability is changed to *detect thoughts* three times a day).

**General Ariyan (8<sup>th</sup> circle):** See Chapter Five "Powers of the Pit"

**General Gazra (8<sup>th</sup> circle):** See Chapter Five "Powers of the Pit"

**General Vhesage (8<sup>th</sup> circle):** See Chapter Five "Powers of the Pit"

## **Infernal Denomination of Mortal Relations (Dark Minister Furcas)**

### **Branches**

*Controls and Contracts* – ensures that diabolical/mortal obligations are met.

*Conversion* – conducts the reeducation of mortals to the primacy of Hell.

*Mortal Contact* – establishes working military relationships with mortals for mutual gain.

### **Generals**

*Controls and Contracts* – Ecexrial, Hesmonondar, Phis-

Chapter Six: The Dark Minister

# The Dark Ministers

## The Six Chaperones

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*Conversion* – Cra’Lingen, Gallus, Hebarlzel  
*Mortal Contact* – Damen, Surposis, Willum

Of the many stereotypes with which devils are associated, the diabolical agents of the Infernal Denomination of Mortal Relations probably come the closest to meeting mortal expectations. And why not? After all, these are the devils with whom most mortals have the greatest contact. These are the devils whose exploits have been turned into fables, legends, and myths. These are the devils that most mortals denigrate and mock in order to make their fear of the darkness, oppression, and tyranny they represent seem foolish. And the devils would have it no other way. The idiotic, pitiful hopes of mortals only make it simply for the devils of Mortal Relations to achieve their goals: the damnation of as many mortal souls as possible.

Within the Legions of Hell, the devils of Mortal Relations have a very ambivalent status in relation to their peers. On one hand, the devils of Mortal Relation do not see active combat with demons and other outsiders as frequently as their more militant peers. They do not risk entering enemy territory; they are not on the field of battle; they are not gathering information in hostile environments. Rather, they spend their time, to one degree or another, bothering with the little creatures that infest the Mortal Coil. Thus, some devils in other Denominations would like to think that those of Mortal Relations are soft and unable or unwilling to truly participate in the reeducation of The Abyss. The idea that even a small minority of Mortal Relations agents are even stymied, much less defeated, by mortals is ludicrous and worthy of nothing less than scorn. However, wiser devils know that the fate of the Depths Below is tied to what occurs on the Mortal Coil.

At the base of Mortal Relations philosophy is the fact that Hell needs mortal souls. The damning of mortals to Hell is essential not just for ammunition but for combat. Still, this is of secondary importance to Mortal Relations. Research completed by Pearza’s Denomination strongly supports the notion that mortal beliefs not only empower divine beings, but also play a role in how ethical and moral attitudes reverberate across the Cosmos. Even the smallest mortal act can have profound implications across Creation, and this includes those mortals who unwittingly support The Abyss or the Gray Wastes by bowing to unrestrained or selfish Evil. Thus, the devils of Mortal Relations are involved in missions that do indeed have incredible relevance to the *Blood War* for mortals, whether they are aware of it or not, may eventually bring ruin or victory to the Legions of Hell. It is no surprise that many higher ranked devils are eager to serve within the Denomination of Mortal Relations, for their successes here will have long lasting repercussions that may not only expedite promotions, but may also increase access to the nobility of Hell.

Mortal Relations works very closely with the other Denominations, particularly Espionage, Immortal Diplomacy, and Research. Mortal Relations relies heavily on the information gathered by the operatives of Espionage in order to not only determine when powerful mortals are involved in or working with demons, but also in determining how and if such mortals should be approached. As mentioned earlier, Research has supported many claims associated with the importance of mortals and has aided in the study of taking full advantage of mortal motivations. Of the Denominations, Mortal Relations works the closest with Immortal Diplomacy. The Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy often exchanges information with their Mortal breth-

ren as they often time have to work out issues dealing with contracts that divine powers contest involving their mortal servants. It is not unusual for Mortal Relations to discontinue a mission at the behest of Immortal Relations when secret agreements are arranged; by the same token, Mortal Relations has often played an important role in the establishment of treaties between (usually evil) gods and Hell due to mortal contracts.

The agents of Mortal Relations are a haughty group who have no doubts about the importance of their missions. They include among the most charismatic devils in Hell; indeed, only the devils of Immortal Diplomacy rival them in the number of soldiers who have been offered noble titles. The devils of the three Branches of this Denomination work extremely close with each other; indeed, it can easily appear to the uninformed that the lines of responsibility between the Branches are transparent. The truth is that Furcas expects all of his agents to be capable of fulfilling all tasks associated with the Denomination if the need arises; “cross-training” is par for the course in this Denomination. The generals of Mortal Relations work more like a board of master guildmen rather than as leaders within their respective branches. Still, if a problem arises with a particularly important contract, Furcas will turn to Ecexrial, Hesmonondar, and Phistrec to fix it rather than to the other six generals.

Of the Legions, those of Mortal Relations probably work the closest with the nobles, particularly with the Dukes of Hell. Furcas routinely lends his services to Dukes as they scour the Mortal Coil; this has made for some interesting end results as the Dukes tend to be relatively slow going their goals compared to the more aggressive Mortal Relations agents. To date, Furcas has managed not to allow his bottom line to drop and his missions risked due to the interests of the Dukes. This is likely due to his own incredible influence and status in Hell as few Dukes would risk offending the greatest of the Dark Ministers... a fact of which most Mortal Relations agents are aware and never fail to use to their advantage.

Recently, the senior generals of the Infernal Denomination of Mortal Relations have received very unusual orders from Minister Furcas. For the time being, all living mortals with whom agents do business must be offered an opportunity to physically enter Hell... and, if possible, legally left in Hell for as long as possible. Ideally, these mortals should be of goodly alignment. To date, Furcas has not deigned to clarify the rationale for these highly unusual orders, but the Mortal Contact Branch of the Denomination has excelled beyond the others in carrying out this order.

### Typical Infernal Denomination of Mortal Relations Units

Squad: Squamugon (5), erinyes (4)

Platoon: 9 squads with erinyes sergeant and erinyes 1<sup>st</sup> circle lieutenant

Company: 9 platoons with erinyes master sergeant and pit fiend 1<sup>st</sup> circle major

Battalion: 9 companies with erinyes sergeant major and pit fiend 9<sup>th</sup> circle major

### **Controls and Contracts** **Branch of Mortal Relations** **(Generals Ecexrial, Hesmonondar, Phistrec)**

Often confused with the Conversion Branch of Mortal Relations, the Branch of Contracts offers another classic

devil stereotype. These devils are responsible for the formation and enforcement of infernal contracts with mortal souls.

Those in charge of forming contracts often work with a member or squad of Conversion, assisting in various tasks until the time is ripe to broach an infernal bargain with those mortals deemed fit for such an "honor." The agent of Contracts is responsible for deciding when and to whom a contract is offered including the establishment of terms.

Contrary to popular belief, infernal contracts do not always require the soul of the mortal client in question. Services, slaves, magical aid.... all of these Hell is willing to take in exchange. On the other hand, so many mortals assume that a bargain with a devil must cost them their soul that the devils often gain that delight free of bargaining.

Devils approach those in bad situations often due to the fact desperate are more willing to give up that which is of little use to their current situation. Many a demon lord has lamented their servants' faithlessness in this regard. Contractors are experts at reading what a target wants and offering just a little less of something unpleasant or more of something perceived as good. They also do not always seek to twist the deal against the mortal; as often as not, such behavior (another diabolical stereotype) is done as part of a larger operation. On the other hand, contractors do seek to make sure their gifts are obtained and used in a manner that ultimately benefits Hell. And so one man who wishes for gold may find it given to him as an inheritance from a hated family member; another may find that it is found in the bloody hands of a traitorous protégé; still another may find it is just given to him in a money pouch, free of any violence or bloodshed. Each contract is fulfilled in a manner befitting the client (often for some time) and contractor.

Contractors are not above creating the situations where a contract may look like the ideal answer. Many times the contractor will spend years undermining the life of their target before approaching them with the bargain. In such cases, the contracting devil will never resort to direct violence itself, usually relying on the animosity and oppressive nature of other mortals that it simply "nudges" along in the right direction to eventually properly impact the life of the client-to-be. If violence occurs, the devil is never directly responsible for it and the contract, if it is ever called into question, cannot be deemed illegal as a result of improper diabolical tampering. In any event, contracts written due to the manipulations of a devil rarely require great effort on the part of said devil in living up to since the devil itself knows the ins and outs of the situation.

Those who enforce contracts make up a smaller but vitally important corps within the branch. These devils are the ones who evaluate any breach of contract, on either the devils' or the mortals' end. Again, while the stereotype suggests that the devils simply twist their bargains and words against the mortal, this is not always the case. Many mortals have successfully argued their case before a panel of judges (in the literal and figurative sense) with the results ending in their favor. Devils found breaching their contracts are always punished and demoted, usually on the spot in front of the mortal they wronged. The honor of Hell is always upheld. Of course, this means that it is very rare indeed to find a case where the devil is knowingly and purposefully violating the contract.

Minister Furcas' policies and promotions benefit the team – not the individual – who captures a mortal heart or soul. To the team who loses a mortal soul, Furcas admits

difficulty in expressing his disappointment. He turns them over to Zimimar promptly for her to do so. Thus the branches under him work together with more cooperative attitudes than found elsewhere in the Ministry, save perhaps those of Immortal Diplomacy.

Diplomacy and Sense Motive are of course the most vital skills to a contractor. Bluff, Disguise, and Intimidate are important as well. Knowledge (local) or Profession (legal) are typically maxed in rank as well. Remaining skill points are usually spent along the lines of Appraise, Decipher Script, Forgery, Spot and other general awareness type skills.

Contractors are formed from the ranks of squamugon and erinyes, with gelugon and pit fiend officers. New pit fiends often hold very low ranks within the branch. The enforcers, almost entirely high ranking officers and their staffs, are composed almost solely of erinyes. The erinyes in this branch are among the most powerful in the Ministry (only Glasya's Elite wield more political clout) and often command pit fiends themselves. In any event, the erinyes in this branch are often promoted directly to pit fiends after centuries of service while squamugons are promoted directly to erinyes.

#### **General Ecexrial (7<sup>th</sup> circle, Order of the Bleeding Blade, 37 HD pit fiend, evangelist 5/fiend of corruption 3):**

General Ecexrial is imposing even among pit fiends, rivaling the vicious Nessian pit fiends in his size and demeanor. Prior to the *Dies Irae* and the establishment of the Dark Ministry, Ecexrial spent a lot of time in the Mortal Coil, effortlessly tempting and gaining the souls of countless mortals. Although most were damned to Hell, a fair number of the more powerful were consumed by Ecexrial who loved to reveal to them how, despite their thoughts to the contrary, he was well within his rights to destroy them utterly due to the contract they signed. He grew powerful on these souls, so much so that it is possible that he would have been among the pit fiends selected to become Dark Ministers. Alas, he was traveling the Cosmos when Asmodeus created the august group, a situation Ecexrial laments to this day. Fortunately for him, word of his successes made Furcas call on him to serve as the head of Controls and Contracts, an assignment that was clearly a no-brainer. Ecexrial exhibits a noble certainty and chooses his words carefully. In his dealings with others, both subordinates and his peers, Ecexrial makes his talents clear; he also makes it clear that others will never achieve his greatness. While he is not a numbers cruncher, Ecexrial knows that he has a quota to meet and cannot afford for those that work below him to fail to pull their fair share. Thus, Ecexrial works very closely with the senior staff of Mortal Relations and often trains those with the most promise in order to increase his bottom-line. Ecexrial has worked with Furcas longer than any of the other generals save Gallus; he has the utmost respect for the Dark Minister and, after centuries of observing him, has decided it is not worth the risk in retiring him. Ecexrial is willing to wait Furcas out as he suspects that the Dark Minister will soon be called into the Courtiers of Perdition. If this occurs, Ecexrial is certain he will take Furcas' place. He views the other generals as talented children, although he shares a mutual disapproval with Gallus. Furcas is considering Ecexrial as his most likely replacement among the Dark Ministers.

#### **General Hesmonondar (6<sup>th</sup> circle 22 HD pit fiend, geomancer 5/wizard 12):**

The precise Hesmonondar com-

plements the more personable Ecexrial well. As the Master Writer of Contracts, Hesmonondar makes sure that every contract meets the needs of Hell before it is signed by any involved parties. He oversees the assessment of risk associated with every new contract as well. In a sense, Hesmonondar is the brain of the Branch of Controls and Contracts while Ecexrial is the soul. The problem, as Hesmonondar sees it, is that Ecexrial is a withered soul who does not truly appreciate the intricacies of contract creation. The Master Writer fears that the nominal head of Controls and Contracts is blinded by his own past successes rather than the reality of the present in which mortals are far more aware of what they have to lose and better prepared to contest the efficacy of written contracts. Thus, while the two generals do not get into arguments with each other, Hesmonondar's frustration with Ecexrial (who is largely oblivious to the younger pit fiend's concerns) is obvious. So far, no one has thought to test the Master Writer's interest in retiring Ecexrial, but it is only a matter of time. Within his Denomination, Hesmonondar is a fair leader and motivator (which means that he is one of the most charismatic devils in Hell); little liked by the ranking officers, the Master Writer never hesitates to flex his authority. He hopes to eventually be transferred to Promotion or Research.

**General Phistrec (6<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, bloodhound 10/ consecrated harrier 10):** Often referred to as the Taloned Hand, General Phistrec oversees the enforcement of signed contracts. Blunt, confrontational, and a brilliant debater, Phistrec does every and anything to ensure that all parties that signed a contract fulfill their obligations. He oversees the devils that provide the benefits outlined in the contract and he is the one that issues the collection of fees from mortals. As a result, he often serves as an unofficial bounty hunter and liaison between the Denomination of Mortal Relations and the Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy when mortals seek out divine intervention to avoid whatever obligation they said they would meet upon signing a diabolical contract. Still, Phistrec is fair; he always seeks to meet the letter, but never the spirit, of the rules and laws as defined by a contract. His relentless nature does not stop with mortals as Phistrec drives his subordinates to do their jobs without failure. Phistrec respects Ecexrial, but perceives him as an arrogant blow-hard; he works closely with Hesmonondar out of necessity and as efficiently as possible as he finds his peer to be somewhat pathetic.

#### Conversion Branch of Mortal Relations (Generals Cra'Lingen, Gallus, Hebarlzel)

The Mortal Branch of Conversion includes the devils that most interact with the Mortal Coil; indeed, it is safe to say that virtually every being knows of these devils and their... interests. These soldiers move through the Mortal Coil, turning the hearts of men to vice.

The Branch of Conversion shares similarities with the Court of Dis, but it is a military organization rather than a commercial one. As such, the activities of this Branch are approached in the form of missions rather than mergers. Furcas' troops have a deadline to meet, and that instills a sense of urgency in their activities (not to be confused with haste; the Branch of Conversion knows that some things can not be rushed). As such, the operatives of Conversion can not employ millennia long schemes to bring a kingdom

to the worship of Hell. They think in terms of years and decades rather than centuries.

Conversion, contrary to popular mortal wishful thinking, rarely involves torrid sexual affair with erinyes (most are likely confusing "torrid affairs" with demonic succubi). While sex is a tool and one that can be used without compunction, the Branch of Conversion finds that simple talk in the tavern or town square yields more promising results.

The souls that are converted to Lawful Evil through the work of Conversion often do not have strict contracts or benefits; that is the work of the Branch of Controls and Contracts. While the best known goal of Conversion is turning mortal souls to Lawful Evil, their lesser known goal is just as important: turning souls away from Chaotic Evil. In order to weaken the grasps of the hordes of The Abyss from the Mortal Coil, the devils within Conversion do anything within their power to tempt Chaotic Evil souls away from their ethical stance. Some even go to the point of luring the soul in question away from Evil if it becomes apparent that Law will not win out.

The soldiers tasked with this mission employ a number of options against Chaotic Evil. One, they seek to establish Law as supreme in a mortal region. They provide the means and rhetoric to cause strong and unyielding law to take root in the hearts of the people. This causes those of a chaotic disposition to come under oppression from their mortal brethren. Two, they stir up local churches, do-gooders, and the like to take the fight to Chaotic Evil's doorstep. Red dragons slain, demonic agents rooted out of their hosts, and marauding bandits slain or clapped in irons. All this often occurs due to the influence of the soldiers of Hell rather than the forces of Realms Above. Finally, they approach the stubborn and open the door for a Contractor to seal the deal. Many selfish people neglect the consequences of signing an *infernal contract*, and in their haste, the Chaotic Evil are bound toward Hell instead of The Abyss.

Squamugon and erinyes make up nearly the entirety of the non-commissioned soldiers of this branch. Imps and spinagon serve similar capacities to lemures of the more militant Denominations, that of ammunition. They are enslaved to potential converts, used as gifts, familiars, and other general purposes. Obedience and distinguished service in this capacity can often mean promotion though, so the diminutive fiends rarely complain *too* loudly.

There are some erinyes and gelugon officers, but the bulk are new pit fiends. Within this branch, one can find some of the lowest ranking pit fiends in the entire Ministry. This branch serves as a sort of testing ground for the pit fiends, ensuring they are as subtle as they are brutal. It is not unheard of for pit fiends of the Branch of Conversion to be placed under the command of a gelugon, or in some cases, an experienced erinyes. The humiliation they tolerate here wipes away any lingering weakness before they are released into the rest of the Ministry as strong and crafty leaders.

Many of the erinyes within this Branch possess class levels, as do a fair number of gelugons and the higher ranking pit fiends. Sorcerers and wizards with magic developed along the lines of Divination, Enchantment, and Illusion are most common, with rogues making up most of the remainder. Fiends of blasphemy and fiends of corruption can also be found in abundance here.

The skills Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive are the high priorities among this branch. Secondary skills include Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Knowledge (local) and any others that help their mission.

Handle Animal seems to be a common choice due to the sometimes supernatural sense animals can display about detecting fiends in mortal form.

**General Gallus (7<sup>th</sup> circle 31 HD pit fiend, cleric 9/high proselytizer 5):** Spiteful, vindictive, and brilliant, General Gallus is the Chief Administrator for the Conversion Branch of Mortal Relations. As flexible as he is cruel, Gallus manages various means to cause more and more mortals to yield to the temptations of Hell. Whether it is the establishment of a new religious organization, the promise of greater authority and control over a town, or the guarantee of wealth and prosperity for a guild, Gallus uses any and all opportunities to entice mortal greed, oppression, and tyranny. Gallus has historically been extremely successful in his management of Conversion and has served as a senior general almost as long as Ecexrial; however, his successes are not as broad as those of his peer and this is due to his inability to avoid confrontation with those who have wronged or challenged him... particularly demons and powerful mortals. Gallus routinely accepts reports from Cra'Lingen from the other Denominations on demonic incursions in the Mortal Coil and goes out his way to establish counter incursions in the same areas. In the past, Gallus was at least somewhat subtle in his machinations, but now he extremely confrontational; a fact that has caused an extremely small percentage of his operations to fail. He has even ignored overtures from the Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy to allow angelic or even axiomatic alternatives, believing that allowing such compromises only weakens Hell's position. Indeed, it is Gallus who cost Furcas the most recent opportunity take a specific mortal soul from the Demon Prince of Shadows, Graz'zt. Furcas has grown tired of Gallus' foolishness and is contemplating retiring or at the very least transferring the general. For the time being, Gallus stands as the second most influential devil in the Denomination of Mortal Relations after Ecexrial, whom he strongly dislikes and views as rival (so much so that only his busy schedule has stopped Gallus from actively seeking to remove him). His immediate subordinates, Cra'Lingen and Hebarlzel, are viewed with suspicion, but he has found their work satisfactory. Gallus dislikes Furcas, but knows that the Dark Minister is too well placed to challenge.

**General Cra'Lingen (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend, exemplar 9/fiend of blasphemy 6):** As the Chief Liaison of Mortal Contact, Cra'Lingen works closely with Phistrec, Damen, the various liaisons of the other Denomination, and the Courtiers of Perdition in all matters related to the conversion of mortals to the cause of Hell. He oversees the quota of conscripts (mortals that are damned to Hell and turned into lemures) and non-commissioned mortals (those mortals who either go into Hell alive or else are considered more valuable with most of their original selves intact after death), which makes him work relatively closely with Dagos' chief administrator, Retya. He also gathers information from the Branch of Espionage of demonic influences in the material plane which he reports to Gallus. Finally, Cra'Lingen works with Hesmonondar to ensure that all contracts are designed properly in the event that they are used. In recent years (and in part based upon his relatively frequent time in field), Cra'Lingen has taken the position that the Conversion Branch is better off taking advantage of mortals' obsessive need to worship virtually anything in order to meet quotas. As such, he advocates the use of false churches, ties with the Courtiers of Perdi-

tion, and even the worship of Lawful gods and outsiders in order to curtail demonic worship (which has grown in popularity in mortal realms). This stance has put him at odds with Gallus, although the latter does not know how strongly Cra'Lingen disagrees with his position. Cra'Lingen is slowly stoking the fires of the Branch to ensure that if he elects to retire Gallus that he will receive support to replace him. So far, Cra'Lingen seems to have the general support of the newer pit fiend officers, erinyes, gelugons, and even the few mortal operatives and half-fiends while the older prefer Hebarlzel, who likewise seeks to take advantage of Gallus' recent failures. Fortunately for Cra'Lingen, Hebarlzel is unaware of his intentions, which has given him room to maneuver around the more established pit fiend. For the most part, Cra'Lingen works as well with those beyond his Branch as with those within; this alone makes him the most likely candidate for a promotion should Gallus retire so far as Furcas is concerned.

**General Hebarlzel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 33 HD pit fiend, rogue 10):** The Operating Officer of Conversion, Hebarlzel manages the day-to-day activities of the Branch. Training, distribution of units, and discipline fall under his responsibilities. Having served longer than Cra'Lingen, he is highly regarded by the older pit fiend generals, but – having not spent much time in the field for the past few centuries – he has not gained the respect of younger pit fiends nor the erinyes or gelugon commanders. He is viewed as a by-the-book devil, something that may be beneficial in other Denominations, but of little use in Conversion. Hebarlzel sees Cra'Lingen as too flexible, too loose in his style and, therefore, a threat to the status quo of Conversion. One would think this means that Hebarlzel supports Gallus; such is not the case. While Hebarlzel general agrees with Gallus' positions, he also knows that the old devil has failed in his activities in recent years. Hebarlzel could not care less about what has led to the failures, but knows a lame-duck when he sees one and now hopes to take advantage of it. The longer served pit fiends, a minority in Conversion, have flocked to support Hebarlzel. What the Operating Officer does not know is that Cra'Lingen has broad support at the lower levels of the officer ranks and into the Mortal Coil; more importantly, Furcas himself prefers Cra'Lingen and this alone likely means that Hebarlzel's old school intrigue will afford him little.

#### **Mortal Contact Branch of Mortal Relations (Generals Damen, Surposis, Willum)**

Hell's interests lie with the living Mortal Coil as much as it does with the souls of those who pass from it. The actions of dwarves, elves, sapiens, and others carry a reflection in the Realms Beyond that can mean the difference between victory and destruction for Hell. The Mortal Contact Branch of Mortal Relations, also known as the shepherds, sees to it that these reflections mean victory.

Mortal Contact is concerned with large scale events involving mortals and the influence of other spirits. On each world, these agents work undercover for centuries to counter the actions of angelic and demonic forces and keep humanity on a course complimentary to Hell's aims.

A squad of soldiers takes responsibility for a population group numbering roughly one hundred thousand individuals. Embedding themselves in the society, they have nine years to evaluate (if in a new territory) or nine months to acclimate (if taking over the mission for an established

group). Either way, once this grace period is over, the devils begin to enact far reaching plans that will allow them both easy access to mortal favors and the progression of a culture and eventually a society pleasing to Hell.

During time of war, these soldiers make use of their favors in order to aid the fighting troops as much as possible. True names of demons are slipped to those who would make use of them, removing key individuals from the enemy forces at inopportune moments. Adventurers are given access to quests that will damage Chaotic Evil from a long term view. Demonslaying organizations are founded and equipped. All for the purpose of Hell's ultimate benefit and can easily be adapted to address angelic and other spiritual threats.

Mortal Contact also provides an established source of information for the other two branches of Mortal Relations. Conversion and Contracts both find easy pickings among the population of a well maintained group under the Shepherds watch. Key individuals and groups are already prepared for the more overt work of the Conversion.

Shepherds often possess class levels, with cleric and rogue being some of the most popular. Divine agent, divine emissary, evangelist, exemplar, and spymaster are also abundant.

Diplomacy, Disguise, and Knowledge (local) are the most important skills of the shepherds. Handle Animal, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (religion), Perform (oratory), and Sense Motive are secondary in importance. A shepherd must not only be able to guide people, but also walk among them unnoticed.

Shepherds include spinagons, erinyes, gelugons, and pit fiends. Imps are utilized as well, but less than the true devil spinagons. Again, common only to this Denomination, fresh pit fiends can be found in low ranked positions. They are frequently field commanders for shepherds' missions, usually overseeing a territory the size of a continent or overly populous country.

**General Surposis (7<sup>th</sup> circle, Order of the Bleeding Blade, 32 HD pit fiend, epic infiltrator 8/evangelist 5):** General Surposis is a bloated pit fiend with no doubts about his status and his right to command. Having served for a great deal of time in Strategy, Surposis has seen countless battles and won the majority in which he was involved. He also saw time as an operative in Espionage. His transition to Mortal Relations was made in part due to his frequent use and subversion of mortals during campaigns and his ability to meld into almost any environment without being detected. Now as the head of Mortal Contact, Surposis enjoys the opportunity to preach the gospel of Hell in an environment where real advances can be made. Surposis directly commands the Shepherds and oversees each world in which Hell has a stake. He despises direct contact, believing that to be the province of Conversion, and believes that his forces should never reveal their true natures. Surposis is too arrogant to view the other senior generals of Mortal Relations as threats to his station and fully expects to eventually become a Dark Minister, although he has his eyes set on Immortal Diplomacy. While he will continue to give Willum free rein so long as he continues to be successful, he is somewhat perturbed by Furcas' decision to promote Damen. As such, Surposis never fails to remind Damen that he is but a subordinate in the branch. Surposis does not worry that Damen will ever manipulate the information he shares in order to make Surposis' operatives successful as Surposis has made it

very clear that if he is brought down due to shoddy information, Damen will brought down as well.

**General Damen (7<sup>th</sup> circle 27 HD pit fiend, rogue 10/sorcerer 6):** Damen serves as the communications liaison for Mortal Contacts and, in a sense, is the most important liaison within the entire Denomination. He oversees the placement of diabolical agents across a mortal world, which in turn means that his office is involved with the incursions of Controls and Contracts and Conversion. This authority allows him to wield the rank of 7<sup>th</sup> circle general although he is still technically subservient to Surposis, the fact of which that the latter never fails to remind Damen. Damen grates under Surposis dominance, but until Furcas decides to release Damen from the current situation, there is nothing he can do about it. Damen routinely meets with Cra'Lingen and Phistrec in order to maintain the overarching goals of Mortal Contact. Although neither especially likes Damen, they recognize that he knows what he is doing and that he is interested in the hegemony of Hell. Damen has no serious issues with Willum or most of the other generals (he has no love for Gallus and avoids Ecexrial as much as possible), but is frustrated with the fact that he seems incapable of truly exercising his higher rank. Damen's rise in status over the years has been through discrediting others rather than removing them as he fears what would occur if he failed. Damen does not know that this is what has stalled him. He bitterly resents Furcas for this insult and, of the all the generals, despises the Minster the most, an irony considering that Damen is an extremely competent leader. Furcas simply wants to see how much Damen wants to lead and, if the latter proves that he is willing to attempt to retire another general (save himself of course), he will grant him authority commensurate with his rank.

**General Willum (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend, fiend of corruption 6/mindbender 10):** Willum is a long-time general within the Denomination of Mortal Relations and a successful one. Willum takes pleasure in interacting directly with mortals and, of all the high ranking generals in the Denomination, deals with mortals the most frequently. As the head of Counter Chaos of Mortal Contacts, Willum's responsibilities overlap with those of the other branches. He is kept informed of all Conversion attempts to make sure that he has a good pool of mortals from which to draw for attacks against demons. He has to deal closely with Controls and Contracts as his division drafts a large number of contracts. Interestingly, he rarely deals with the Courtiers of Perdition as his interest lie in using mortals to address *Blood War* matters, not just for the purpose of turning them to Lawful Evil. Willum receives updates and reports from Damen and, on occasion, directly from the devils of Espionage in the field. While he assigns his staff to contact most mortals traveling or intent on traveling to the Realms Beyond, Willum prefers to deal with the more powerful mortals (at least 18<sup>th</sup> level ECL). He often meets in neutral territory and is one of the few spirits of his status actually allowed to travel Sigil, when the bulk of his appointments are scheduled in a bar called the Grinning Imp. Willum has a cynical and ironic sense of humor and gets along remarkably well with mortals. He goes out of his way to conceal his true nature, often wearing magic items to resist divinations. His preference is to work with neutral or goodly mortals; on the one hand, he knows that such mortals will eagerly do all they can to defeat demons while on the other hand he knows that the more they deal

with him, the steeper the decent into Perdition their fall will be. He is generally fair in his dealings, although he is a stickler for the letter of the law. Willum seems uninterested in greater promotion opportunities in the Legions; he is fairly content with his position and sees no reason to seek out additional responsibilities. Wise devils know better than to assume that Willum is a weak-willed fool as he is extremely jealous of his status. He works relatively well with Damen and Surposis and considers the other generals of Mortal Relations worth-while peers, although he does his best to avoid their intrigue. He is relatively well-respected by the Denomination of Espionage.

### **Infernal Denomination of Promotion (Dark Minister Zaebos)**

#### **Branches**

*Communications* – relays messages from one commander or unit to another, keeping all troops aware of their responsibilities and the battle situation.

*Evaluation* – monitors high level officers to determine those fit for promotion.

*Logistics* – keeps records of all activity and ammunition expenditures.

#### **Generals**

*Communications* – Agthaniel, Kreptoth, Quilpeth

*Evaluation* – Braalhibet, Jezerrik, Vendrin

*Logistics* – Grogoris, Lamprist, Tarpelial

Those beyond Hell rarely consider the degree to which the devils seek to quantify everything they do. This desire permeates every aspect of existence in Hell, including the *Blood War*. It falls upon the devils of the Infernal Denomination of Promotion to capture the value and expense of Hell's part in this conflict.

Although most think of the Infernal Denomination of Promotion as only evaluating devils in their service to Hell, the agents of this aspect of the Ministry are interested in maintaining streamlined interactions between the various Denominations and the efficiency of the armies as a whole. Thus, while Supply generates and distributes material orders and Research creates magical devices, Promotion oversees both Denominations to make sure that nothing is wasted as they pursue their tasks. While Morale ensures that devils adhere to the soul of the Ministry, Promotions ensures that devils commit to its physical intent.

Promotion has the distinction of having some of the least ethical devils in the Ministry, something of an irony considering their role. What is odd with Promotion is that while these devils would never offer strong recommendations to an unworthy devil, they are not above bribery when forced to make a decision between relatively equal devils (something that happens extremely often). This sort of thing is rampant across the Denomination and, since Morale only gets involved with Promotion decisions if it is apparent that the inappropriate decision was made, little has been done to address this seeming inequity. So far as the devils are concerned, sometimes additional effort on the part of promotion candidates is necessary in order for the proper final decision to be made. Most Promotion agents are very cautious, though, in taking gifts; they do not display their wealth and they are extremely subtle about suggesting bribes. The devil that blatantly offers a promotion official a bribe is certain to end up in the White Book, his name slashed from promotion opportunities for

centuries, if not forever at best; at worst, such devils may receive a visit from the Denomination of Morale.

In addition to recommendations for promotion and demotion, the devils of this Denomination oversee communication efforts between the branches. The various liaisons from the different Denominations often meet with the communication heads in order to ensure that all essential information is available to the movers and shakers in the Ministry. Logistics also works as a check to Supply, overseeing the proper distribution of all wares across the Ministry.

While it is one of the more influential factions of the Legions of Hell, the Denomination of Promotions is universally despised by most devils. There is not a single Denomination that strives to work closely with Promotions although all must to one degree or another. The two Denominations most closely attached to Promotions are Morale and Supply. Supply units often work very closely with Promotion units in the distribution of wares. There are plenty of pay offs from Supply colonels and generals to reduce Promotion agent interests in their books; in recent centuries as new pit fiends have risen in both areas, these pay offs have increased substantially, creating greater tensions and even blatant assassination attempts. Morale must also work closely with Promotions due to the latter's heavily involvement in the regular assessment of devil productivity. If a Promotions agent suspects that a devil is stealing from the Ministry to a degree that is detrimental to the war effort (and this degree changes from devil to devil), the perpetrator is reported to Morale. It is not uncommon for Promotion to have to answer to Morale concerns of impropriety, though, which has made for many stiff interactions between operatives of the two Denominations.

Minister Zaebos has recently become an extremely highly regarded general in the Dark Ministry. He is slowly eradicating the bribery rampant in the Denomination by eliminating devils that have served for over a thousand years (either seeing to their retirement, transferring them to the front lines of Strategy, or setting them up with the military police in Morale). He hopes to clean out the vice within the next three hundred years. His relatively recent adjustments to the promotions of greater devils has placed more focus on his words and interests than ever before as he and his senior staff now have greater opportunity to observe up and coming officers. In particular, gelugons and pit fiends have seen expectations to their castes adjusted due to Zaebos' new promotion philosophy. Some of the most productive pit fiends have been promoted in the past few centuries, most of them in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> circle general ranks, although there are smatterings of 6<sup>th</sup> and even 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals who have benefited from Zaebos' new paradigm. So far, most of these devils have not accorded the Minister of Promotions any additional consideration in their duties, but a small number suspect that Zaebos is positioning himself to become the dominant Minister in Hell. What these devils do not know is that Minister Zimimar of Morale has planted spies throughout Promotion to determine Zaebos' ultimate goal. Once her operatives complete their evaluations, it is possible that the Ministry of Promotions will experience significant changes.

### **The Promotional Branch of Communications (Generals Agthaniel, Kreptoth, Quilpeth)**

The Branch of Communications is responsible for keeping all commanders in touch with the overarching battle

# The Dark Ministry

## Chapter Six

picture so that they may make informed decisions regarding their missions.

All 1<sup>st</sup> circle generals have at least a platoon of communications specialists under their direct command. The different members of the platoon are usually divided up as the general sees fit, although most assign them among direct subordinates. Some generals prefer a broad efficient breakdown, with each specialist serving as a messenger between him and several subordinates while others have "favored" underlings who rate as a personal messenger. Still others, particularly those in the Infernal Denominations of Espionage and Strategy, attach the bulk of the platoon to junior officers, so that direct battlefield communication is possible where it is most needed.

Communicators are typically spinagon. They use their *greater teleport* to relay messages almost instantaneously between those they serve. Aside from spinagon, lesser devils that are being punished sometimes are transferred to the position of message relay, similar to those transferred to Supply. Nothing is more demeaning for a devil than being used as an imp.

Other methods of communication include magical devices such as rings or gems that allow one to telepathically communicate with another person possessing a linked device. These devices are more costly than simple spinagon abuse, and have a major disadvantage, at least from Zaebos' point of view. They do not allow any third parties to observe the information being passed. All of the communicators in the Ministry know they may be called upon at any time to give testimony to Zaebos over what information they have. Zaebos has been quite lenient in allowing the Denomination of Morale to keep eyes on this branch. Those foolish devils who attempt to betray Hell with their information are caught regularly enough to keep such occurrences down. Those who draw the Minister's ire are often turned into scapegoats for crimes of this sort if he feels there have not been enough in the past to remain vivid in his troops' memories. Therefore, communication devices are extremely rare, and usually only found within higher ranking commanders' hands.

Higher ranking communicators are wizards or sorcerers, typically erinyes and osyluths, who make use of such spells as *sending* in addition to *greater teleport*. The most common officers are cornugons followed by gelugons.

**General Quilpeth (7<sup>th</sup> circle 29 HD pit fiend agent retriever 10/sorcerer 1/spymaster):** General Quilpeth is the Chief Communications Officer of the Ministry, a position he loathes. In the distant past, Quilpeth was high ranked, very active officer in Espionage, working as a spy in Sigil. Despite years of flawless service, Quilpeth got himself involved in a conspiracy involving the marquis half-demon, Rule-Of-Three, and the angel, Unity-Of-Rings, that resulted in an embarrassing and catastrophic loss to the forces of Hell in the Mortal Coil known as the Calamity of the Laws. While Quilpeth was able to shift most of the blame to the rest of his unit (who were all demoted at least one caste), Corin knew better. Rather than demote Quilpeth as well, he made arrangements with Zaebos to transfer the cause of the debacle to one of the most under appreciated commands in the Ministry: Communications. Here, Quilpeth has served since, his former station taken by the previous 7<sup>th</sup> circle general of the communicators. Now, Quilpeth strives to bring some modicum of excitement to his dull work. He is the one behind the proliferation of communication devices and, due to his past success in Espionage, has managed to conceal all signs of

his involvement. He now spends his time following after rumors and appearances of these devices, turning down offers of assistance from Morale. So far, no one suspects his culpability as Corin, Zaebos, nor Zimimar think Quilpeth is capable of causing trouble. Recently, however, Quilpeth learned that one of the devices he sent out was taken up by agents of the demon prince, Apollyon. He is hoping that the device's safe return and the destruction of the demon will allow him to regain his former stature.

**General Agthaniel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 28 HD pit fiend fighter 6/rogue 5):** The Executive Officer of Communication, Agthaniel also serves as the chief liaison to the various Denominations, ensuring that their communication needs are met. Lacking the ingenuity and creativity his superior officer possesses, Agthaniel is content in his duties and performs them well. He does not care that he is considered a fool by all other senior generals in the Dark Ministry as he knows that if he were so inclined, he could route much of the chatter that sweeps across the Legions and use it to his own advantage. Instead, Agthaniel pours over contracts, documents, and files to keep himself busy. The recent situation with the communication devices has caused Agthaniel more work than he would prefer and he wholeheartedly supports Zaebos' fierce reprisals for any devil caught with one. He does find Quilpeth's excitement over the situation interesting, although he has no reason to suspect anything untoward regarding his leader's behavior. He oddly does not find himself threatened by the more capable and dedicated Kreptoth, who has recently started to pull minor duties Agthaniel used to oversee to his control. Zaebos finds Agthaniel to be an ancient throwback to previous, non-seeded "Zaeboes," but wants to see how long the pit fiend can avoid retirement... something he has managed for an inordinately long period of time.

**General Kreptoth (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24HD cleric 3/dread inquisitor 3/void disciple 13):** Kreptoth is the Chief Operating Officer of Communication and tends to the day-to-day business of the branch. He is a recent promotion, having served for a time in Morale and Strategy. Upon his promotion to 6<sup>th</sup> circle general, he requested a transfer to Communication for all the right reasons so far as Zaebos was able to discern. Kreptoth plans on consolidating Communication into a hub of information gathering that will allow the branch to assume greater assessment possibilities for promotion and demotion decisions. What Zaebos does not know is that Kreptoth was asked by Zimimar to take the position in order to spy upon Zaebos and learn more about the Minister of Promotions. Kreptoth, having only served a century thus far, has already slowly stripped some of Agthaniel's authority and is consolidating the roles of the communicators attached to other Denominations. So far, he has not had the opportunity observe Zaebos as much as he would like, but has grown suspicious of Quilpeth, his nominal superior officer. Aware of the Chief Communications Officer's past, Kreptoth treats Quilpeth with scorn and has been surprised to see that the latter is too distracted with the communication device issues to take note. Kreptoth is considering investigating Quilpeth and hopes that his discoveries will lead him to a promotion that will put him even closer to Zaebos.

### The Promotional Branch of Evaluation (Generals Braalthibet, Jezerrik, Vendrin)

The Branch of Evaluation works directly alongside

commanders. They are usually the junior-most officers in the command group, but given a great deal of respect. Their words can dictate a devil's future prospects, and no devil is fool enough to tempt fate by antagonizing them. On the other hand, giving them too much favor is seen as an attempt to bribe, which can be just as devastating. Evaluators are found in every brigade level command, and often in regimental and battalion command groups as well. Due to Zaebos' new policy of internal promotions, most of these lesser units are being folded into larger ones, or disbanded and transferred elsewhere in the Legions.

The evaluators are highly trained in observation. They are also extremely ethical and honest when it comes to their duties not so much out of respect for their responsibilities but for their dedication to Hell... And the promise of the most horrific punishments if they recommend the promotion of someone unfit for the opportunity.

The evaluators offer suggestions for promotion of lesser devils but their opinions do not have to be entertained. Conversely, evaluators are often called upon to relay their observations of junior and senior commanders before Zaebos and, on occasion, before the entire Dark Ministry coven. Surprisingly, there is a relatively low retirement rate among the evaluators. The Dark Ministers frown upon the elimination of the devils that have such an important impact on the promotion of fit leaders and Zimimar has been known to arrest entire regiments if an evaluator met a mysterious end. It takes a lot, then, for a disenfranchised devil to attack an evaluator; when this occurs, the devil ensures that the evaluator is not killed but trapped somewhere for all eternity or, better yet, proven to have taken bribes.

Many evaluators are erinyes and osyluths. Among the officers, there are few that are not pit fiends. Skills needed for this branch include Appraise, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Spot. Attention to detail is a must.

**General Braalthibet (7<sup>th</sup> circle, Order of the Bleeding Blade, 31 HD pit fiend, monk 9/survivor 5):** Braalthibet is one of the most hated pit fiends in the Legions. A long time general in Evaluation, he has survived more retirement parties than any other Chief Evaluator. Braalthibet is an ethical, but incredibly cruel pit fiend. As the penultimate authority on promotions and the devil responsible for pit fiend promotion and demotion decisions, he does not tolerate any slips or failures. A single blight on a record over a 1000 year period and Braalthibet will not recommend a promotion within the caste and will certainly not entertain gelugons or the rare erinyes seeking entry into the caste. The nature of his job requires that Braalthibet be surrounded by five squads of double advanced hamatulas; he also has a squad of military police at his beck and call at all times (in addition to the typical support possessed by all 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals). Braalthibet supervises his lieutenants very closely and has demoted the vast majority over the past few millennia. He has been most displeased with Jezerrik due to what he perceives as the latter's regular capitulation to branch heads on decisions over lesser devils decisions. He is also displeased with the apparent lack of attention to the relatively open bribery that has developed in the branch. Braalthibet is likely to demote him in the near future. Braalthibet has strong ties to the Denomination of Morale, particularly those in the Branch of Truth. The Chief Evaluator considers Zaebos to be competent, although he thinks the Minister of Promotions is too lenient, one of the many reflections of this being Quilpeth's status as a 7<sup>th</sup> circle general. Braalthibet records all demo-

tion recommendations and blacklists in the Legions in the *White Book*. The cover of this monstrous tome is made from the feathers of solars with pages pressed from trees native to Elysium. Shimmering with white light and gilded with diamonds, the *White Book* is on a chain attached to an iron collar around Braalthibet's neck. The only devil other than Braalthibet allowed to touch, much less write in, the *White Book* is Zaebos.

**General Jezerrik (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend psychic warrior 5/warmind 10):** The High Evaluator of the Lower Castes, not only does General Jezerrik sign off on all lesser devil evaluations, he also deals with daily branch operations. Although he has served longer as senior general than Yendrin, he has only done so for just under 300 years and is the first High evaluator of the Lower Castes to deal with the greater Denomination control over lesser devil promotions. As such, he is finding that the Denominations are very eager to get their own way and see no reason to back down from their decisions regardless of what Jezerrik says, although they are careful do so in the proper manner. Thus, while the other generals treat Jezerrik with the respect due to his station, Braalthibet is disgusted with Jezerrik's performance to date. To make matters worse, as the direct supervisor for all field evaluations, Jezerrik has been unable to curtail the bribes that have become more common place. Braalthibet has made it clear that if he does not improve, his own demotion is assured. Needless to say, Jezerrik hates the Chief Evaluator and, despite the latter's wall of security, has already made arrangements for a retirement attempt in the next 20 years. Jezerrik knows if he fails that his existence is forfeit. Still, he believes that since he is not using other devils but mortal contacts he made when he was in Mortal Relations (who think they are going to kill a Dark Minister) he can get away with it. Only recently has Espionage caught wind of this and, fortunately for Jezerrik the agents from that Denomination that have become involved were all turned down promotion opportunities in part due to the Chief Evaluator. They are considering allowing the mortals safe passage into Hell...

**General Vendrin (6<sup>th</sup> circle 27 HD pit fiend, divine crusader 4/templar 10):** An even more recent appointee into Evaluation, General Vendrin serves as the High Evaluator of the Greater Castes and is technically the final authority on all greater devil promotions and demotions. Having served the bulk of his time in Morale's Branch of Truth, Vendrin knows how to eliminate bribery within his staff and has no problem impressing upon the various generals that he is not a pit fiend to challenge. While he has the tentative respect of the Chief Evaluator, Vendrin has already suffered six retirement parties in his 200 year term as a branch lead. Vendrin is cool and collected, though, and has not bothered to increase his security detail as he has no intention of showing fear. In this way, he regards Brallthibet with contempt, something the Chief Evaluator senses and loathes, although he is not yet ready to demote Vendrin for his insolence. Furthermore, Vendrin has the support of Zaebos. Despite his past work in Morale, Vendrin was not tapped by Zimimar to spy on the Minister of Promotions as Vendrin is completely in Zaebos' pocket. Thus far, Vendrin is not aware of Kreptoth's spying.

#### The Promotional Branch of Logistics (Generals Grogoris, Lamprist, Tarpelial)

Chapter Six The Dark Ministry

# The Dark Ministry

## Chapter Six

In all things, the Dark Ministry seeks to achieve and maintain peak efficiency. The Branch of Logistics of the Denomination of Promotion plays a chief role in ensuring this goal.

The Branch of Logistics contains the largely independent report writers, bean counters, and determiners of the Ministry's efficiency from the single devil to a Denomination. Everything from a conflict between a single devil and demon to the grandest military victory is distilled into a series of numbers and a bottom line. It is this branch that records which units are making the most efficient use of their lemures, which units have allowed the highest number of sundered weapons, and which have allowed the greatest losses; they also determine the success ratio of all units. These various reports are compiled to form continuous, giant evaluations of the military efficiency of the Legions as a whole. While smaller reports are used to determine where the best supplies are sent first, which units bear watching for promotion or demotion of their soldiers, and sometimes even discover theft and treachery within the ranks, the Legionnaire Report is accessible only to the Dark Ministers, who also determine which of the smaller reports are accessible to lower ranked personnel.

For every quartermaster in a unit, there are usually one or two logistics soldiers as well. The logistics soldiers are regarded as fools at best, spineless cowards at worst. Oddly, they have historically received the greatest abuse from the Denomination of Supply. Others, particularly the troops of Strategy, have little use for them. Accidents in the field are common place among logistics troops; unlike the evaluators, retaliation from the Dark Ministers is not as severe when logistics troops disappear or are retired largely because the reports they create are just as often written telepathically as manually.

The majority of logistics soldiers are hamatulas, although there are smatterings of osyluths. Erinyes tend to be low-ranking officers with cornugons and pit fiends rounding out the upper ranks. Psions, rogues, and wizards are the most common classes with Appraise, Search, and Spot being the eminent skills.

**General Grogoris (7<sup>th</sup> circle 35 HD pit fiend, exemplar 10):** Chief Logistics Officer of the Dark Ministry, General Grogoris functions is the devil responsible for regular updates for the Legionnaire Report. An old devil, Grogoris is meticulous to the point of obsession surpassing that of other devils. He is never satisfied that the reports he receives are accurate and requires that all reports are triple checked... sometimes even more. The Chief Logistics Officer keeps to himself in Nessus. Although he has not been the focus of many retirement parties, he knows that he is little liked among his peers and sees no reason to place himself as a target. Still, he is not exactly a coward and has no problem about informing Zaebos about questionable numbers and routinely recommends investigations from the Denomination of Morale, with whom has his most non-Promotion allies. Grogoris is an overbearing supervisor, watching every last thing Lamprist and Tarpelial do; unsurprisingly, his subordinates detest him. Still, neither wants to the responsibility of managing the Legionnaire Report and have played roles in foiling retirement parties planned for the Chief Logistics Officer.

**General Lamprist (6<sup>th</sup> circle 22 HD pit fiend, rogue 17):** Slimy Lamprist is the Denominational Logistics

Manager, directing all logistic officers appointments to the other Denominations. Conniving and fawning, Lamprist seeks to acquire as much personal reward for his efforts. He issues platitudes and flattery to any in a greater position of power, not-so-subtly making it clear that he will allow for great lee-way in how his reports are compiled in return for favors. Lamprist always keeps an accurate report hidden somewhere in his offices in the event that he is betrayed or offended at a later date, but typically keeps to his word unless he is questioned by Grogoris or Zaebos. What Lamprist does not know is that Zaebos is aware of his shenanigans and is setting the Logistics Manager up for a retirement as he is tired of the graft out of this office. Zaebos hopes that Lamprist's example will encourage other logistics officers to take their roles more seriously, which in turn may allow him to put more pressure on his fellow Dark Ministers to offer greater punishments to those that attempt or succeed in harming them. Lamprist is not a fool though; he knows that Tarpelial hates him and knows that Grogoris is constantly watching him. While he has done his part to sabotage Tarpelial and keep Grogoris happy, he has no idea what Zaebos has in store for him...

**General Tarpelial (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend, assassin 3/cleric 3/zealot 10):** Tarpelial is a competent officer in Logistics, fortunate considering that he is the Logistics Operations Officer. In his role, he reviews all Denomination Reports he receives from Lamprist's teams and ensures that the information is transmitted into memory gems, on parchment, precious metals and stone, on souls, and other less savory or mystical structures. Tarpelial also supervises the training of entry level logistics officers, impressing upon them the importance of their role before they report to Lamprist, who invariably ruins most of this training with his behavior. Tarpelial hates Lamprist, but knows that the time swiftly approaches when the Logistics Manager will be retired. Tarpelial assumes that his duties will be shifted to fill Lamprist's current duties; in anticipation for this, he has groomed a number of 5<sup>th</sup> circle general pit fiends to replace him. He expects to see them struggle to gain the position, thereby reducing the potential of more than one being an eventual threat to his own position. Tarpelial works well with Zaebos, having benefited from the Minister of Promotions nouveau promoting philosophy. He hopes that he will soon rise to the head of the branch, an occurrence Tarpelial believes will allow him to bring greater respect to Logistics across the Legions.

### **Infernal Denomination of Research (Dark Minister Pearza, Chief of Research)**

#### **Branches**

*Alchemical Devices* – development of alchemical agents to expedite the reeducation of blasphemers (poison, disease and other biological agents).

*Experimental* – development of new magical weaponry.

*Mystic Defense* – development of magical defenses.

#### **Generals**

*Alchemical Devices* – Cyndrel, Xal'Drial, Zalred

*Experimental* – Goap, Nexroth, Salac

*Mystic Defense* – Felsric, Immediel, Nacrottis

Research remains an under appreciated cornerstone in the Dark Ministry. While many of the Legions' most spectacular victories, most insidious ailments, and exemplary invasive devices have been due to the phenomenal creations and experiments of this Denomination, the devils of Research are largely regarded with scorn by their peers. This attitude stems from the historic fact that the devils of Research are often those whose dedication lies not in the mission of the Dark Ministry, but in using the power of the mind to reveal the power of Order and Evil. To the troops in Research, the use of intellect to perpetuate organized vice is as, if not more, important as the use of direct and physical force to impose the right of Hell against the Cosmos. The benefit, as the diabolical researchers see it, is that there is no need to waste time discussing and debating with lesser beings when they can be forced to do Hell's bidding or else die in denying Hell. This attitude, while not wholly beyond that of rest of the Ministry, does not sit well because it is an almost heretical interpretation of The Overlord's original decree. Fortunately for the Denomination of Research, what they bring to the Ministry is far too valuable for there to be a purging of their ranks so they are allowed to persist in their behavior.

Intuition, creativity, and a dedication to The Word are all required aspects for the successful Research soldier. The devils in this Denomination must be able to look beyond the limitation of natural rules and regulations and into the realm of possibilities and what ifs in order to effectively manipulate the Ideal. This ability to step outside of boundaries is one of the reasons why many devils best suited for Research are reviled by their peers. Devils of this sort would have long ago been forced to conform to Hell's strictures or else would have been banished (forced to serve exiled arch-devils like Haagenti) or destroyed. Now, these devils have a place in Hell, a place in which their intuition is rewarded if not appreciated. It is interesting to note that the devils of Research are among the most zealous believers in the Dark Ministry. To date, not a single traitor has ever been accused by anyone, not even the dread inquisitors of Morale. These troops are proud of the fact that there is something in which they can believe, something in which they can research and learn more about. A further irony is that the researchers have the third highest rate of devils offered placement as servants of the Courtiers of Perdition across all levels. Apparently, Hell's nobles have come to realize that such devils are as committed to the cause of Hell as they, just in a variation of the established mold. This evolution and broadening of what is considered proper diabolic behavior will perhaps eventually bleed into the more conservative elements of the Dark Ministry. For now, it does little more than infuriate troops in the other Denominations.

The troops of Research spend the bulk of their time seeking out new forms of magic, the creation or manipulation of diseases and poisons, and the means to bring The Word further under the control of Hell. They work very closely with junior officers of Espionage, Strategy, and Supply in the creation of magical weapons and mystical arts for use in the field. They often receive requests for unique items from the agents of Mortal Relations that are in turn given to mortal clients. Some of their most interesting creations are those requested by Immortal Diplomacy and Morale. While the former often seeks items that can, with a word, change from boon to bane in the hands of those that receive them, the latter are always

seeking new ways to spy upon possible traitors. Indeed, of the Denominations, the Researchers get along best with those of Morale, an irony given the stance Morale officers tend to take.

If there is one overarching goal in the Denomination of Research, it is to discover the means to control all forms of magic. The original Pearza (her fate unknown) created what is commonly referred to as Written Theory. Written Theory holds that if the belief that empowers The Word could be controlled, then all Creation would fall under the dominance of Hell. So far, this theory is known only the senior officers of the Denomination and the Dark Ministers (and Asmodeus). It remains a highly classified secret that has yet to fall into demonic or daemonic hands. However, aspects of this research may have something to do with the steady shipping of certain lemures gathered across Hell over the past few thousand years. How these lemures, usually gathered directly from the Lake of Fire, are distinguished from others is unclear, but they are shipped to Pearza's Laboratory in Malsheem. It is believed that Research has more lemures than any other Denomination in the Ministry, even more than Strategy. The Denomination is preparing to ship these lemures to the Pit of Darkness where they will be used to perform a mission known only as The Bringing. What they plan on bringing forth is known only to the Dark Ministers...

#### **The Research Branch of Alchemical Devices (Generals Cyndrel, Xal'Drial, Zalred)**

The Research Branch of Alchemical Devices is in charge of developing new poisons, diseases, and other forms of death and oblivion when reeducation efforts fail. In addition, the researchers of Alchemical Devices have used disease, poisons, and other products to create many abominations by restructuring the laws of Nature.

The Branch of Alchemical Devices both develops and tests their products often by introducing them into victims on the Mortal Coil. Plagues blamed upon the gods are sometimes successful missions executed by the branch. This has put the branch into some interesting situations with and against entities better associated with disease and poison, like daemons and even the inevitables of Nirvana.

Field agents of this branch are organized into a typical military squad structures but most of the branch (indeed, most of the Denomination) is structured similar to a laboratory or medical environment, with a lead researcher overseeing multiple ongoing projects. Lower level officers are expected to be accomplishing their own projects rather than simply supervising others. Higher level officers are always preoccupied with their projects; the difference between them and lower ranked officers is that they can allocate resources as they see fit to better serve their needs.

Poisons have been developed by the branch with selective targeting, tertiary damage, and even immunity overrides. All forms of introduction are considered. The chief beneficiaries of this branch's endeavors are the liquidators of the Denomination of Espionage and the police of the Denomination of Morale, although they do occasionally find their way into the Denomination of Mortal Relations and Strategy, and even more rarely in the Denomination of Immortal Diplomacy. Natara, Commander of the Infernal Charge, was a successful

member of this corps of the branch before being promoted into a narzugon.

Diseases follow closely after poisons in diabolical research. The nature of the diabolical has historically been to assassinate specific targets, but devils value the ability to deal with entire populations that threaten their goals. Aside from *devil's chills*, many other afflictions have been leveled on humanity and demons from the fruits of the branch's labors.

Experimental creation research has grown in favor in recent centuries. It is commonly thought that kythons are one such ancient example and a spectacular failure, a reason why such attempts have only recently been taken up again. Many more "traditional" breeding projects, on the other hand, have been conducted for millennia on individual worlds, producing high number of half-fiends, nephilim, tieflings and other creatures of diabolical stock. Another common research method consists of animals with fiendish blood being slowly introduced into natural eco-cycles. Many worlds are so tainted with the devils' work that it becomes necessary for their gods to cleanse them. The devils have developed more subtle methods as a result of their projects being purged or washed from the face of mortal worlds, including spiritual infections in which it takes considerable time for the nature of Hell to be realized in a given world. A not so subtle method has been the use of infernal grafts, something that the current Pearza in particular supports.

Erinyes, hamatula, kocrachons, and spinagon make up the non-commissioned soldiers of this branch. There are some erinyes officers and fewer kocrachons, with the bulk being barregons, gelugons and pit fiends.

Many within this branch possess class levels. Sorcerers and wizards with Necromancy and Transmutation are most common, with rogues and rangers making up most of the remainder.

The skills Craft (alchemy), Craft (poison), Heal, and Knowledge (arcana) are the high priorities among this branch. Secondary skills include Handle Animal, Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (nature).

#### Typical field testing units

Squad: Erinyes (3), kocrachons (3), spinagon (3).

Platoon: 9 squads with erinyes sergeant and erinyes 2nd circle lieutenant.

Company: 9 platoons with erinyes master sergeant and barregon 1<sup>st</sup> circle major.

Battalion: 9 companies with hamatula sergeant major and barregon 7<sup>th</sup> circle major.

**Cyndrel (7<sup>th</sup> circle 28 HD pit fiend, effigy master 5/transmuter 13):** Arch Researcher of Alchemical Devices Cyndrel is a devil after Pearza's own heart. Literally. Cyndrel despises the Chief of Research not because she is a fool and not because of her attitudes regarding her role in the *Blood War*, but because she is both more intelligent and creative than Cyndrel. Cyndrel has experienced a fast rise in power over the past three hundred years, benefiting from his own skills and Zaebos' new promotion method. As his time spent as a low ranking colonel in the Denomination of Strategy, Cyndrel proved his skills with diseases, poisons, and the creation of new monsters to set against demons in the field. He even spent his earliest days as a general in the Denomination of Mortal Relations, where he used diseases and poisons of his own design to follow through on the requests of mortal clients, and, more importantly, to collect fees

from those clients at the appointed time. He saw his transfer to Research as an opportunity to continue his swift rise and believed that his goals were met until he became one of the three 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals under Pearza. Now he finds that his skills, once lauded over by superiors, are regarded with scorn and derision by the Chief of Research who regards his ideas as little more than interesting. Cyndrel has done little to conceal his hatred for Pearza and the other eight ranking generals are looking forward to the time Cyndrel goes to far and becomes Pearza's next test subject. Pearza stays her hand because, for the time being, she needs a competent administrator of the Branch of Alchemical Devices, something in which Cyndrel excels. Once she is satisfied that either Xal'Drial or Zalred, or lower ranking generals are ready for the opportunity, she will make one by destroying Cyndrel. Unsurprisingly, Cyndrel has no real allies, although he thinks that he can trust Nexothon, a foolish position on his part as Nexothon is the reason Pearza knows everything about her Arch Researcher's issues.

**Xal'Drial (6<sup>th</sup> circle 18 HD pit fiend, wizard 23):** Xal'Drial is the High Researcher of Alchemical Devices and oversees poisons, diseases, and their testing. She is very interested in field testing and often finds excuses to travel to the Mortal Coil, or – better yet – into the Gray Wastes to observe how other beings react to her staff's creations. Xal'Drial is a relatively old devil and had been in the erinyes caste for millennia before the *Dies Irae*. She spent a long time working with daemonic mercenaries in the employ of Nergal, a Duke of the Seventh. Her interest in plagues, diseases, and all manner of ailments took root during these years and she became an accomplished researcher and spellcaster. Fear of losing her talents kept her as an erinyes. When the Dark Ministry was created, she was forced to leave Nergal's side and enter the Denomination of Research's Branch of Mystic Defense. One of the earlier Pearza's noticed her skills and offered her a chance to retain her memories but not her skills upon promotion to pit fiend status. If she could prove herself all over again, she would become a chief researcher in Alchemical Devices. Xal'Drial accepted and, after a few thousand years of struggle, she regained and then surpassed her former skills. The current Pearza promoted her, aware of the earlier agreement. Xal'Drial is not much of an administrator and she would rather not have to work closely with others, perhaps a result of her long term exposure to daemons. Pearza tolerates this so long as Xal'Drial's productivity does not wane. This could have been a problem as some of her subordinates were slowly beginning to take advantage of their leader's lax nature. Xal'Drial took notice and, to her own surprise, swiftly reacted, demoting some of the more notorious failures in her staff. She has little to do with any of the generals save Cyndrel, whom she finds quite foolish for letting his emotions get the better of him.

**Zalred (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 pit fiend HD, master transmogrifist 10/sorcerer 10):** Grafting, experimental creation techniques, and the like fall under the auspices of High Researcher Zalred. Cold and twisted, Zalred is one of a number of devils in Research that spent much time as a slave within the Perdition of Phlegethos before entering the Denomination. In Zalred's case, he worked on the staff of an inquisitor in Governor Gazra's command, experimenting on various means of extracting informa-

## Diabolical Diseases



Although daemons and demons are better known for their diseases, devils have created some of the most pervasive epidemics in the Cosmos. The following are among Minister Pearza's favorites.

### Agony's sweat

**Incubation Period:** 3d4 days

**Infection:** Contact with an infected creature or ingestion of tainted agony (see *Book of Vile Darkness*)

**DC:** 18

**Damage:** 2d2 Con

The victims of agony's sweat have their blood slowly transmuted into the drug agony. Agony's sweat deals 2d2 Con damage on a failed save to the victim. For every 2 points of Con damage dealt, the victim exudes the equivalent of a dose of agony through his skin over a period of 1d4 hours per dose, receiving a -4 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks during the time frame due to the extreme pain. Following the duration, the victim suffers as if he had consumed one dose of agony. Those afflicted with agony's sweat are constantly slicked with a thin layer of agony, spending the short span of life remaining to them alternating between extreme agony and the drug rapture. Even if he successfully fights off this disease, the victim is addicted to the drug agony.

The nature of this disease makes it very difficult to catch in most places; however, once an epidemic starts it is almost impossible to trace to its original source.

Death by Agony's sweat is surprisingly bloodless, the body often lies in a large puddle of agony, completely exsanguinated by the disease with a face frozen in a silent, agonized scream.

### Haemonex

**Incubation Period:** 1d4+1 days

**Infection:** Ingested or inhaled

**DC:** 25

**Damage:** 1d4 Str, 1d3 Dex, 1d3 Con

Created by a cabal of devils seeking a means to annihilate entire worlds quickly and with minimal effort, haemonex is feared by the wise. The disease draws the strength and vitality from its victim by destroying the blood. Victims describe the disease as a freezing in the blood, with each beat of the heart bringing numbing pain and a great chilling ache throughout the body. As the disease progresses, the cold increases in severity. Eventually, the victim loses the ability to even draw breath, dying of suffocation soon after. Despite the cold, haemonex causes a high fever and a meaningless, dry cough.

The fairly long period after infection before the disease begins to produce symptoms can lead to entire villages being infected and makes it especially difficult to determine the originator. This is especially true in areas which use common water supplies like wells. Haemonex is spread through swallowing or breathing infected fluid and is typically introduced in temperate, sub-tropical, or tropical mortal areas with close ties to nature and liberty.

### Tongue Yoke

**Incubation Period:** 1 day

**Infection:** Inhaled

**DC:** 24

**Damage:** 1d2 points of Wisdom and Charisma damage, and special (loses ability to communicate).

Tongue yoke is used to strike at the forces of Good at their strongest area: their ability to verbally inspire and lead others to resist tyranny and oppression. Tongue yoke enters the body through inhalation and incubates quickly. Within 24 hours, the victim suffers pain in the head, disorientation, and weariness. The true horror comes when he awakens the next day. When the victim tries to speak, he finds that nothing comes out; he can still hear and understand others perfectly, but something prevents him from finding the words to communicate.

The name of the disease is in fact a misnomer; the problem is not in the tongue or indeed any other part of the body, which remains perfectly healthy. Tongue yoke attacks the brain. Victims cannot speak, write, use sign language or communicate in any meaningful way; they simply can no longer comprehend how to formulate words. They also become incapable of understanding the speech of others. This terrifying disease can spread swiftly and devastate entire civilizations, destroying a people's cohesiveness and ability to cooperate, much less defend themselves. Even those that resist the tongue yoke often might as well not have for there is often nobody else left with whom they can speak.

Tongue yoke is a magical disease and thus resistant to normal healing. All Heal checks against the disease suffer a -9 penalty and casters attempting to cure it with *remove disease* must succeed a DC 19 caster level check to succeed.

## Poisons of the Pit



The development of poisons is a long standing tradition within the Research Branch of Alchemical Devices. What follows are three new poisons that have greatly impressed Chief of Research, Pearza. Aside from war ash, the materials needed to create these poisons are unknown, making them extremely expensive.

### Blood Wind

Blood wind is a painful and debilitating poison developed used against powerful enemies resistant or immune to most poisons.

**Description:** Light blue liquid that takes on a rich red upon entering the body of the victim

**Application:** Injury, DC 23

**Initial damage:** 2d6 Con

**Secondary damage:** 3d6 Con

**Tertiary damage:** 4d6 Con

**Effect:** The immediate effect of blood wind is to cause extremely rapid dilation and selective laceration of the internal vasculature of an affected being, resulting in swelling of the airway and extensive leaking of fluids from vessels into surrounding tissue, as well as internal bleeding. This causes the target's entire body to swell immediately and any wounds the target has sustained begin to bleed vigorously.

However, it is mere minutes before the poison's true aspect is manifested. If the second save is failed, the skin over the victim's carotid arteries breaks and the carotid ruptures, spouting forth an impressive fount of blood. This spewing blood is blood wind's namesake, and is often used as a gruesome calling card by prominent assassins.

Blood wind can affect even creatures immune to poison, although such creatures gain a +8 bonus on their saving throw.

**Price:** 7500 gp

**DC to Create:** 25

### Vision of Delight

Vision of delight serves as a potent way to control enemies while leaving them alive for interrogation. On occasion, it is given to mortals as part of deals with the Infernal Denomination of Mortal Relations.

**Description:** Vision of delight is a clear liquid that must be administered through the mouth in pure form; it loses its efficacy if mixed or diluted. It scalds the lips and tongue, but those who succumb quickly forget the pain.

**Application:** Ingestion Will DC 23 (antimagical poison)

**Initial damage:** 1d4 Wisdom damage and hallucination for one minute

**Secondary damage:** 1d2 Wisdom drain and hallucination (permanent)

**Effect:** The victim is overcome by hallucinations of bliss, believing that he has found a paradise tailored to his personal desires. Depending on the amount of time the victim spends under the influence of vision of delight, he may experience a fleeting vision of utopia or he may spend "years" living the fulfillment of all his dreams. A victim who fails the first save against vision of delight, but succeeds on his second save, has largely managed to resist the poison's temptation. A victim who fails the second save, however, does not truly recover from the poison even if he is cured at a later date. An intense obsession with regaining the perfect world that he lost drives him, and he will often go to extreme lengths to regain what he lost. Such victims suffers a -9 penalty on all saving throws associated with future exposures to this poison. Once a victim has been cured of vision of delight, he is resistant to further damage, receiving a +9 bonus to save.

In the real world, the victim does not age and does not require food, water, or sleep; he simply remains in whatever position he is put in (treat the victim as helpless). Injuries sustained in the real world, though they affect the body, do not register in the mind of the poisoned creature; only the poison's cure or the victim's death can release him from the delusion.

**Price:** 1500 gp

**DC to Create:** 25

### War Ash

Throughout the ages and after countless war between the Legions of Hell against hordes of the Abyss, the dust and ashes of war lies scattered over the Cosmos. Research conducted by Hell found that, when mixed with other horrific ingredients like angel tears, dragon bile, or the procreative juices of a tarrasque, the ashes create the poison known as war ash.

**Description:** Fine grey silvery ash, lighter than the finest sand.

**Application:** Ingested or inhaled DC 18

**Initial damage:** 3d6 Con and convulsion (see effect)

**Secondary damage:** 3d6 Con and hit point lost (see effect)

**Effect:** War ash is in fact minute "metallic" particles created from the fiery battles between Hell and The Abyss. War ash, whether ingested or inhaled, will immediately take effect within the victim's body. Once inside the body, the metallic particles eviscerate the lungs and blood vessels to produce painful internal bleeding. Should the victim fail the first save he suffer 3d6 Con ability damage as his body is wracked with pain and convulsions. Should the victim fail his second save, he will suffer another 3d6 Con ability damage and will henceforth suffer 1 point of hit point damage per round until a *heal* spell is cast on his person or he dies. War ash is only used by the most experienced assassin for a single mishandling can prove fatal. It is fairly easy to detect when ingested as it has a acrid taste; when encountered beyond the Depths Below, it carries the sickening-sweet scent of burning blood. It is interesting to note that war ash made from deposits in the Gray Wastes of Despair has a DC 23.

**Price:** 5000 gp

**DC to Create:** 20

tion while creating new weapons or new creatures. Gazra, while impressed with Zalred's obvious talents, had little use for his interests (as they would have drawn unwanted attention from Belial and his Dukes) and arranged a transfer to Research. Here, Zalred has excelled. He sees neither the physical nor spiritual form as fixed; rather, both can be restructured to create new Laws, new order, to benefit Hell. During his time in Phlegethos, Zalred plied his craft on other devils; now, he has a wide range of creatures upon which to experiment, although his favorites are demons, daemons, and other non-Lawful fiends. He finds mortals far too fragile, although he is musing about new ways to extend their lives to make them worthwhile research subjects. Due to his successes in grafting, Zalred is a favorite of Pearza. For his part, Zalred could care less so long as he continues to receive the necessary support from her. He controls his staff through fear; quite a few who have failed him (often without knowing how or when) disappear, although pieces of them are later found as grafts. Still, Zalred makes a point to interact with the other senior generals of the Denomination, particularly Goap of the Experimental Branch (through whom he gets some of his creations into the Mortal Coil) and the generals of the Strategic Branch of Land, who often find use for his creations. He has recently caught the eye of Duke Malphas, who is quite impressed with his creations. It is possible that Zalred will be offered an opportunity in Malphas' court in the near future.

### The Experimental Branch of Research (Generals Goap, Nexroth, Salac)

The Research Branch of Experimentation is involved with the development of new and devastating weapons for the armies of Hell. These weapons may come in the form of wondrous items, spells or innovative approaches to existing materials.

Those charged with developing new spells and magical weapons for the Ministry are largely wizards. Eternally, they spend their time attempting to twist eldritch energies to their desired ends. The *demon dirge* spell was a direct result of this branch. The demon-bane enchantment is often attributed to their work as well, although this is a dubious claim as there have been demon-bane weapons older than the institution of the Dark Ministry. Other members of the branch attempt to create rituals and invocations to hasten Hell's inevitable triumph. Once a new spell or magical weapon formula has been tested and proven capable, it is passed on to the Mystic Defense branch and to the Denomination of Supply.

Pearza has formed a small elite corps charged with battlefield testing new products. Only the bravest or punished are placed in this corps as many of the missions become suicidal when the product fails spectacularly. On the other hand, these devils have also accomplished some of the most devastating victories against The Abyss due to the overwhelming spectacle the failure produced. These units can be expected to carry roughly triple standard equipment in magical items.

Due to the nature of the branch, only devils with class levels or the ability to create magic items work herein. Wizards dominate, with sorcerers, clerics, and psions making up a small minority. Hierrmagons and erinyes compose the lower level troops, with gelugons and pit fiends in the higher officer ranks. The exception is the

battlefield testing squads, which are often barbazu, hamatula, and spinagon who have failed to meet the standard their superiors set for them prior to their transfer

**General Nexroth (7<sup>th</sup> circle 27 HD pit fiend, archmage 5/wizard 15):** In all ways, Arch Developer Nexroth is the most powerful devil in the Infernal Branch of Research and Pearza's strongest ally. Bearing little of the oblivious nature of most of the generals in Research, Nexroth is an old devil with many connections that have benefited both him and his current general. Nexroth once served as a baron in the Court of Cania and was ever a thorn in the side of its Regent, Mephistopheles. He played a role in the Lord of No Mercy's overthrow at the hands of Molikroth and was recognized for his role and promoted to 8<sup>th</sup> circle general of the new Lord's armies. However, eventually Molikroth revealed himself to be Mephistopheles in disguise and Nexroth was shackled and brought before the Lord of Darkness. Rather than consume his soul, Mephistopheles made arrangements for Nexroth to serve on the front lines of the Legions in the *Blood War* and exiled him from Cania on pain of destruction. Nexroth, although stripped of his rank, remained a pit fiend, thereby excelling in infantry combat despite having to take orders from even spinagons. However, Dagos could not deny the former noble's skills in combat and with magic and, after a few thousand years, offered him steady promotion opportunities. Recently, Dagos offered Nexroth to Pearza, who took him without hesitation as a 1<sup>st</sup> circle general. Pleased with his insight, his organization, and his cold dedication to magic, Pearza did not step in when Nexroth slowly retired all those in his way. Upon becoming the 7<sup>th</sup> circle general of Experimental Research, Nexroth is near to his former status. He has regained the surviving allies that survived Mephistopheles' return and believes that he has a chance to return to the Courtiers if he can prove himself in the Ministry. Oddly, Nexroth has no interest in retiring Pearza, likely because he recalls too well the last time he tried to overthrow a truly powerful devil. He is also more interested in the Infernal Denomination of Morale, odd given his past behavior. Still, Nexroth's magical knowledge and willingness to seek new applications for the arcane, make him an asset to the Branch. His subordinates regard him in awe and are too cowed in his presence to contemplate betraying him.

**General Goap (6<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, warmage 10/wizard 10):** General Goap is the Chief of Field Experiments and, as such, serves as a liaison to the other Research branches and Denominations. He receives clearance for his researchers to enter the middle of combat action or else into the Mortal Coil to conduct field tests. Goap is, like most of the generals in Research, largely oblivious to matters not related to magical experimentation; however, his regular participation in field experiments allows him the opportunity to see war-related events far more often than most other devils in Research. As such, his zealotry is a bit more pronounced than the norm, something that has led to Goap entering combat himself when he sees demons overcoming his tests. The Chief of Field Experiments is relatively organized and keeps a firm grasp of his subordinates. He has no real issue with failure as such is part of the experimentation process; still, if the same failure occurs twice, Goap delivers swift punishment for stupidity and incompetence. Goap works well with Zalred; not at all dis-

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concerted with the High Researcher's bizarre nature, he often uses Zalred's creations in the field when the opportunity arises. He also works well with Nexroth, whom he sees as a powerful, influential leader, one worthy of respect and fear. He has interacts with Salac because he has to, but finds the general to be not especially intelligent and therefore not worthy of respect.

**General Salac (6<sup>th</sup> circle 22 HD pit fiend, wizard (diviner) 13):** Salac is the Chief Research Officer for the branch, tending to the day-to-day activities, running reports, training, and ensuring that Goap and his team never lose sight of the branch's goals. While Salac continues to conduct research of his own, as more and more productivity has become par for the course in the branch, he has had less time to commit to his preferred work. Salac has excelled in his role, though, and knows that he will continue to function in this capacity until and unless Nexroth and/or Goap depart for other opportunities. Salac has considered retiring one or both of them, but knows that Nexroth is far too established and receives the support of Pearza, and that Goap has enough contacts to make a move without the Chief of Field Experiments hearing wind of plans. Salac has little good to say about Goap, whom he finds to be too far removed from the importance of tending to the realities of the war. Salac is feared by the troops of Experimental Research for his swift temper and willingness to severely punish those who fail to adhere to the strictures he has put in place over the branch. He views the other branch heads as more or less competent, although he sees little reason to become involved in intrigue if it can be helped.

### The Research Branch of Mystic Defense (Generals Felsric, Immediel, Nacrottis)

The Mystic Defense branch of Research provides the bulk of magical support to the Ministry. Each and every one soldier in this branch is focused in a particular area of magic and is often called upon to exercise this talent for the cause of Perdition. Thus, the bulk of these soldiers are wizards; relatively few sorcerers are found here due to the heavy focus on research, but they are far more numerous than other arcane spellcasters and certainly more so than divine spellcasters. Finally, one can find the occasional psion as well. Typical missions for branch personnel include protecting high ranking officers, bringing down the protective abjurations of the enemy, counter-spelling, and forming defensive wards around camps and forts.

Most generals have a personal squad of mystic defenders attached to them. A 1<sup>st</sup> circle general can expect three defenders, with at least one capable of casting 6<sup>th</sup> level spells. Every day, these mages prepare and cast protective spells upon their charge. *False life, greater magic weapon, mage armor, and nondetection* are all common every day choices. *Protection from energy or resist energy* (often electricity) is cast before going into any potentially dangerous area, along with *heroism* and *stoneskin*. Once battle has been joined, a complete suite of spells including *blur, freedom of movement, greater heroism, haste, resistance and shield* is cast upon their charge. Other common spells include *bear's endurance, bull's strength, death ward, eagle's splendor, and expeditious retreat*, depending on the nature of the foes at hand and the personality of their charge. A common tactic in

the field is for one of the defenders to cast *globe of invulnerability* and stand next to the general, encompassing him in the protective field.

Higher level generals can expect such protections as *mind blank, foresight, and spell turning* cast upon their persons in addition to the lower level spells. 5<sup>th</sup> circle generals and above have six to nine defenders attached to them, at least two of who can cast 8<sup>th</sup> level spells and one who can cast 9<sup>th</sup> level spells. The 6<sup>th</sup> circle and higher ranking generals can expect that their entourage will include clerics and possibly psions.

The more active members of this branch work with the frontline troops or Espionage teams. They are expected to keep up with the more physical members of their team, no excuses accepted. For those attached to units under the Denomination of Strategy, they typically position themselves towards the rear of the battle lines and attempt to counter-spell any magical enemy attacks. Nearly all of these troops have access to the Quicken Spell and Reactive Counterspell feats. Those that accompany the Denomination of Espionage detect and dispel wards and other magical alert systems. A simple misstep and an entire mission can dissolve into utter failure. These casters are very careful to clear a clean path through which Espionage troops can pass.

The final group of Mystic Defense focuses on defending actual fortifications from demonic incursion. The most vital areas of a diabolical war camp are protected via *dimensional lock* and *forbiddance*. Others are highly guarded through both forms of *anticipate teleport*. *Walls of dispel magic, fire, and law* in addition to *alarm* and *guards and wards* are common barriers and signals surrounding most camps. The Branch of Mystic Defense tends to these spells around the clock, renewing them and altering their positions as needed.

**General Immediel (7<sup>th</sup> circle 26 HD pit fiend, initiate of the sevenfold veil 7/ wizard (abjurer) 12):** Under the leadership of Immediel, the High Commander of Mystic Defense, the branch has grown into a force to be reckoned with. Immediel has served as the senior officer of the branch since the first Pearza and, irritated at the foolish attitude he knew festered across the Legions regarding the Denomination as a whole, slowly and steadily shifted Mystic Defense from distributing magical baubles and training other Denominations on their use to the potent bodyguards and essential support troops they have become. Immediel is the second most influential general in Research after Nexroth. He greatly dislikes the shorter serving Arch Developer, recognizing competition when he sees it, and has been stewing over means to retire the former noble for years. Immediel is startlingly intelligent, but his intellect is complemented by his wit and strong personality. He knows better than to come across as a threat to Nexroth, much less Pearza, and the Arch Developer perceives him as an ally for the time being. When he is not overseeing training, Immediel acts as Pearza's attaché, regularly meeting with her on matters related to other Denomination needs. He passes this information on to Nacrottis although he always remains in the loop. Immediel eventually intends on retiring Pearza, although he knows he needs to tend to Nexroth first. While he has nothing against the Chief of Research, he sees no reason not to seek better opportunities for himself and believes that her position would suit him well. He has taken care not to even give an inkling of his interests to anyone within the branch, but has

plenty of allies scattered across the lower ranks in the other two branches. As a leader, Immedial is not quite as effective as Nexoarth, but Felsric and Nacrottis know better than to challenge Immedial as both of them were recently promoted after the High Commander eliminated their predecessors after a failed retirement attempt.

**General Felsric (6<sup>th</sup> circle 25 HD pit fiend, warmage 18):** The Mystic Artillery Commander of the Ministry, Felsric is probably the Research general who comes across as though he is out of his element. Brash, boisterous, and confrontational, most think he would better serve his career and the Legions as a general in the Denomination of Strategy. Although he may well be loud and somewhat obnoxious by Research standards, Felsric is every bit as intelligent as he peers. Felsric serves as the chief liaison for the branch and often meets with generals in Espionage, Strategy, and Supply regarding fortifications and mystic bombs, making sure that they are properly outfitted. He pushes his troops hard, never accepting slow production and has demoted quite a few who have not been able to keep up with production goals. Felsric has only recently assumed his post, benefiting from the removal of his predecessor at the hands of Immedial. As such, Felsric is slowly determining where he stands in relation to the other branch heads. He has no love for Immedial but no dissatisfaction either. He and Nacrottis have a tense rivalry as they both seek to impress Immedial and Pearza; so far, this rivalry has not developed into anything unpleasant, although the possibility is certainly there.

**General Nacrottis (6<sup>th</sup> circle 22 HD pit fiend, archmage 3/agent savant 5/wizard 9):** General Nacrottis is the Chief Commanding Officer of the Branch of Mystic Defense. In addition to overseeing daily branch operations, he manages the assignment of spellcasters to Ministry generals. As the new CCO, Nacrottis has been forced to receive occasional audits of his assignments from the Infernal Denomination of Morale to ensure that his appointments do not benefit him. So far, the agents of Zimimar have been impressed with Nacrottis' apparent impartiality and professionalism in his duties. Nacrottis is himself a talented wizard, having once served as an attendant to Dagos. His skill with the Word are impressive as they should be considering that he was trained by the Black Magus himself, Duke Leonar of Cania. While his ties to the Eighth have long been discontinued, Nacrottis' reputation as a loyal servant continue to echo across Perdition. His loyalty is to Hell and it was this loyalty that prompted him to slip information to Immedial regarding the treacherous acts of the former MAC and OOC. Nacrottis is extremely slippery and difficult to read, a trait he continues to nurse as he grows in authority. Nacrottis is considering making his services known to Immedial in order to strengthen his own position against Felsric, whom he sees as a threat to his continued success.

### The Infernal Denomination of Strategy (Dark Minister Dagos, Marshal of the Pits)

#### Branches

- Air – Flying attack forces
- Land – Ground attack forces
- Sea – Naval attack forces

#### Generals

- Air – Alusiel, Galarond, Phanior
- Land – Hanariel, Meritos, Srelial
- Sea – Kobbis, Laginus, Meathe

By far, the best known Denomination within the Legions is Strategy, the most commonly encountered “instructional” force. Controlled with brutal efficiency and cold precision by the Marshal of the Pits, Dagos, the Denomination of Strategy constitutes some of the most powerful warriors in the Depths Below and the Cosmos at large.

Although Dagos is the ultimate military strategist and commander in the Ministry, his success is in part due to the service provided by his supreme command sergeant major, the cornugon Gathgorian, and the generals and admirals of the Three Strategic Branches: Air, Land, and Sea. Each Infernal Branch is controlled by three pit fiend generals or three pit fiend admirals, one slightly higher ranked than the other two but no greater in actual authority without Dagos’ explicit leave. The generals and admirals are renowned warriors, having overcome inconceivable odds in scores of battles against demonic forces and the machinations of subordinates through guile, wit, and brute strength during their tenures. While each is just a step from becoming the new Marshal of the Pit, a goal every one intends on achieving, not a single one would risk retiring the current Dagos if such an act could threaten the fighting skill of the lower ranks.

The Three Strategic Branches are further divided into three corps. Each of the generals or admirals is responsible for one of the corps. There are at least a billion devils reporting to each of the Strategic generals or admirals.

#### The Strategic Branch of Air (Generals Alusiel, Galarond, and Phanior)

The troops of the Strategic Branch of Air are among the most daring and crafty of Hell’s “instructors.” Charged with undertaking sky born assaults and risky missions, the devils of this branch are also the most arrogant and generally disliked by their brethren in the Denomination of Strategy and beyond.

The Strategic Branch of Air is often on first call in the event of a surprise raid or attack in Hell and, as such, there is at least a squadron always on standby on Avernum. Beyond Perdition, these devils assume a relatively lackadaisical attitude (for devils) and rarely seem particularly concerned with the success of missions as they are convinced of their superiority to other devils, much less demons. Despite the risks they take, the devils of this branch are creative and endure the lowest casualties in the Denomination.

The Strategic Branch of Air has three different corps, the destroyers, ground assault, and skyriders. These three corps work together closely, but with intense rivalry. Although the destroyers engage more foes than the others and are clearly the greatest risk-takers within the Branch, they are also populated by some of the least intelligent (but strongest) devils. Conversely, the canny skyriders consistently establish new techniques during assaults, seeming to go out of their way to welcome destruction yet always coming out relatively unscathed. Ground assault lies somewhere in the middle, although they receive fewer recognitions than either group. So

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**Table 6-4: Strategic Branch of Air Unit Structure**

| Unit          | Unit Composition                         |
|---------------|--|
| Branch of Air | As many Corps as needed (typically nine) |
| Corps         | 99 Forces                                |
| Force         | 81 Wings                                 |
| Wing          | 81 Regiments                             |
| Regiment      | 81 Groups                                |
| Group         | 9 Squadrons                              |
| Squadron      | 9 Flights                                |
| Flight        | 9 Sections                               |
| Section       | 9 devils                                 |

far, Dagos has seen fit to allow this risk-taking attitude to proliferate as it continues to bring results, even if it means that the generals of the Branch are among the most hated throughout the Dark Ministry.

### Dark Flight (General Phanior)

The Dark Flight, also known as destroyers, is used to eliminate the aerial forces of the enemy. Squamugons make up the lower level infantry with squadrons led by malebranche and cornugons.

The destroyers move in directly to engage flying enemy forces. Their goal is to counter and destroy enemy air forces; as a result, they typically hold a line above the allied land forces. They are never deployed too far beyond the ground forces line in order to avoid getting caught between enemy air forces and archers from the ground. Once air superiority has been established the destroyers become a second front, attacking the rear ranks of the foe.

Dark Flight troops often *summon* aid as a first attack, usually directly in the path of an advancing foe. Destroyers are allowed to withdraw for restoration once they are reduced to 5% of their hit points.

### Typical Dark Flight Units

Section: Squamugon (9).

Flight: 9 sections led by malebranche sergeant and cornugon lieutenant.

Squadron: 9 flights led by malebranche master sergeant and cornugon captain.

Group: 9 squadrons led by cornugon sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> major.

Regiment: 9 groups led by cornugon sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> colonel.

Wing: 9 regiments led by cornugon sergeant major and pit fiend 9<sup>th</sup> colonel.

**General Phanior (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend, legendary dreadnaught 19):** The bombastic Phanior is one of the most disliked senior officers in the Dark Ministry. Arrogant and willful, he holds his tongue around no one; even Dagos fumes when Phanior is near as the General of the Dark Flight has few qualms about questioning the Marshal's orders. Phanior's attitude is bolstered by his knowledge of his successes and the fact that, although there are plenty of talented officers serving under him, not a single one is as gifted a leader for the Dark Flight Corps. Phanior is no fool, though, and knows when to

keep his mouth shut; after all, he knows that others could do a passable enough job were he to be retired. Of the generals in the Infernal Denomination of Strategy, only Alusiel has visited the front more often; however, not even the august leader of the skyriders personally appears in the skies and this attitude has won Phanior the respect of his troops. Phanior has no special animosity towards any of his colleagues, viewing each and every one of them as incompetent fools. He almost respects Alusiel and Srelial for their longevity, but suspects that in the near future, it will be time for one of the two of them to retire and he intends on either replacing Alusiel as the head of the skyriders or else placing a loyal servant over the infernal cavalry. Phanior works very closely with Ruthegax, the command sergeant major of the Dark Flight; although the malebranche does not particularly like the general, he recognizes a military genius when he sees one and knows that his fate is likely tied to his master's and does his best to support him. Phanior watches Ruthegax closely, though, as he knows that the malebranche is a powerful devil and one that could be a threat in the future.

### Ground Assault (General Galarond)

The ground assault forces of the Strategic Branch of Air consist largely of squamugon and erinyses with cornugon officers. Their purpose is to provide long range support fire for the ground forces.

Ground assault troops take to the air behind the destroyers, targeting any large troop formations that are near engagement with allied forces. Any charges attempted by the enemy must be made under constant fire from the ground assault. Ground assault always remains behind destroyer forces to ensure they do not draw attacks of opportunity while they carry out their work.

### Typical Ground Assault Units

Section: Squamugon (5), erinyses (4).

Flight: 9 sections led by erinyses sergeant and erinyses lieutenant.

Squadron: 9 flights led by cornugon master sergeant and cornugon captain.

Group: 9 squadrons led by cornugon sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> major.

Regiment: 9 groups led by cornugon command sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> colonel.

Wing: 9 regiments led by cornugon command sergeant major and pit fiend 9<sup>th</sup> colonel.

**Equipment:** Squamugon are equipped with master-work composite shortbows and cold iron arrows. Erinyses carry standard equipment. Officers typically carry heavy repeating crossbows and two *wands of fireball or magic missiles*. Officers often wear *bracers of archery* and *brooches of shielding*.

**General Galarond (6<sup>th</sup> circle 22 HD pit fiend, cleric 9, marshal 9):** General Galarond has been recently promoted to 6<sup>th</sup> circle general status and leader of ground assault. What happened to General Morfellus, his predecessor, is unknown; to be sure few care as Morfellus' strategies resulted in the highest casualties among with the ground forces since the establishment of the Dark Ministry and six different generals over ground assault. Galarond is a cold-hearted master with little patience for failure or cowardice. He expects his troops to not only serve well but to serve with distinction. He has no qualms about demoting or even destroying those that fail

him. It is no surprise that despite his short tenure that ground assault has been the most productive it has been in centuries. Galarond is an efficient leader who excels in whipping his troops into preparation; his background in the Infernal Denomination of Morale is likely key to his success in this regard. Among the other generals of the Denomination of Strategy, Galarond is viewed with simmering loathing. They are watching for weakness and to date none has been found. For the time being they have left him be as his hands are full with completing the restructuring of his branch. For his part, Galarond respects Alusiel and Srelial; he considers Meritos a satisfactory general and intends on using the General of Infantry's skills to weed out the failures of the lower ranks. He views Dagos with restrained awe.

#### Skyriders (General Alusiel)

The aerial cavalry of Hell is mounted on either draconic (true) or half-fiendish steeds. There are two primary corps, the infernal riders and draco riders. It should be noted that the Land cavalry on nightmares is also capable of aerial attacks.

The infernal riders consist of troops who ride diabolically fiendish monsters into battle. Mounts include manticore and griffon-bred stock (many of these creatures are no longer remotely related to their mortal counterparts and have various names, fell beast and fallen sun being the best known "species" of fiendish manticores and fiendish griffons). Most such creatures are usually ridden by hamatula and narzugon. Gelugon commanders are sometimes mounted on half-fiend behirs.

Draco riders consist of the troops who ride the blue or green children of Tiamat. Such dragons typically join the Legions of Hell of their own accord and often in pursuit of greater wealth that they eventually transfer to the Mortal Coil or else use to establish Infernal Realms in Hell. They are better regarded as troops themselves rather than as mercenaries, a fact of which too many demons are ignorant. Hamatula and narzugon ride young adult dragons while gelugon commanders ride adult or mature adult dragons (older dragons either appear without a rider or deign to allow pit fiend mounts and then only if the pit fiend's CR is higher than its own). Blue dragons are typically ridden by commissioned officers and often have feats or abilities that allow them to penetrate electrical resistance and immunity.

With both flights of riders the devils are usually armed with lances and ranged weapons. The mounts handle the bulk of the melee combat although the devils have natural weaponry for this task as well.

Draco riders are used as both aerial and ground assault forces; they are also often used to destroy fortifications. Infernal riders are used largely to engage other aerial forces as they usually lack the powerful breath weapons and spells possessed by draconic mounts. As some of the most valuable troops of Hell, riders are usually the third or later wave of attack, behind both destroyers and assault troops.

Riders rarely summon aid due to their unique missions and equipment; however, some have taken to engaging other cavalry units and *summoning* aid directly onto the enemy's mounts. Flinging the current occupant to their death and establishing control over the riderless mount is no easy trick and, as a result, this remains a rare tactic. Riders are allowed to withdraw for restoration once they or their mounts are reduced to 25% of their hit points.

#### Typical Draco Rider Units

Section: Hamatula (9) on young adult green dragons.

Flight: 9 sections led by hamatula sergeant and nar zugon lieutenant on young adult dragons.

Squadron: 9 flights led by hamatula master sergeant and nar zugon 9<sup>th</sup> lieutenant on young adult dragons.

Group: 9 squadrons led by hamatula sergeant major and gelugon 1<sup>st</sup> colonel on adult dragons.

Regiment: 9 groups led by nar zugon sergeant major and gelugon 6<sup>th</sup> colonel on mature adult dragons.

Wing: 9 regiments led by nar zugon sergeant major and pit fiend 9<sup>th</sup> colonel on very old dragons.

#### Typical Infernal Rider Units

Section: Nar zugon (9) on fiendish griffons

Flight: 9 sections led by nar zugon sergeant and nar zugon lieutenant on half-fiend griffons

Squadron: 9 flights led by nar zugon master sergeant and nar zugon 5<sup>th</sup> lieutenant on fiendish manticores

Group: 9 squadrons led by nar zugon sergeant major and gelugon 1<sup>st</sup> colonel on fiendish manticores

Regiment: 9 groups led by nar zugon sergeant major and gelugon 3<sup>rd</sup> colonel on fiendish manticores

Wing: 9 regiments led by nar zugon sergeant major and gelugon 9<sup>th</sup> colonel on half-fiend behirs

#### **General Alusiel (7<sup>th</sup> circle, Order of the Bleeding Blade, 34 HD pit fiend, cavalier 10, dragonrider 1):**

The most highly decorated general serving in the Infernal Denomination of Strategy and even older than Srelial, General Alusiel is one of the most influential and important pit fiends in the Dark Ministry. Not only is Alusiel aware of this fact, he has no qualms in using his reputation and status to get what he wants when he wants it. His power transcends just the Denomination of Strategy as he has servants serving throughout the Ministry. The other Dark Ministers are of the position that should the current Dagos ever receive a promotion to a Court of Perdition or experience an early retirement that Alusiel is his certain replacement (Zaebos himself has assured Alusiel of as much). Alusiel is counting on the latter as, in his mind, the ability to retire a sitting Minister is a testament to his power and ingenuity. Although he has never betrayed Dagos nor been outwardly insolent, he has never failed to make his intentions clear to the Marshal of the Pits. Dagos respects this and Alusiel's status, which is why he has not demoted the general or ensured his retirement; Dagos is content to continuing playing a very subtle and incredibly dangerous game with his most gifted and powerful general, one that will eventually end in one of their retirements. Alusiel has already established a plot that will ensure that no one will know when he has replaced the current "Dagos," as he intends on replacing himself with a trusted (relatively speaking) lackey. Alusiel's attitude towards the other generals is one of mild contempt at best, deep hatred at worst (reserved for the coward Meritos and the imbecilic Hanariel). The only general he treats with anything approaching equality is Srelial and that is because the two have served for almost the same length of time and in the same areas with equal success. Alusiel has ties with the Courts of Bael and (surprisingly) Beelzebub and occasionally calls in favors from either.

## The Strategic Branch of Land (Generals Srelial, Hanariel, and Meritos)

The most likely to see hand-to-hand teaching opportunities in the *Blood War*, the devils of the Strategic Branch of Land are thought to be the most violent and direct of the various Denominations and Branches. They suffer the highest casualty rates and incur the most consistent exposure to risks. Unsurprisingly, the rewards for successful completion of land campaigns are great and many of the best known and powerful devils in Hell were served or continue to serve in the Strategic Branch of Land.

The warriors within the Strategic Branch of Land have little patience for flowery language or tactics, preferring what they know works over what may. This lack of creativity on their part may be the sole reason their Line suffers the highest casualty rates in the Denomination, something neither the corps generals nor Dagos seem particularly concerned with since most casualties are actually among the lemures and nupperibos.

The Strategic Branch of Land has three different Corps, the infantry, artillery, and cavalry. These three corps work together intimately, although there is little love lost between those that serve in the Infantry and the other two corps, who have a tendency to treat their brethren with disdain as they work so closely with lemures and nupperibos.

### Artillery (General Hanariel)

The infernal artillery contains typical siege engines, crossbowmen, and archers. Their purpose is to provide long range support fire for the infantry and cavalry.

Artillery bombardment precedes lemure rushes and only breaks off once the infantry engages a foe in melee. Artillery then provides support fire, targeting groups and foe reserves who are not engaged. The siege engines are typically only brought into play during large scale conflicts. They bombard the rear ranks of the enemy with their ammunition which ranges from spell-bombs to squads of lemures. These engines are considered heavy artillery. On occasion, exotic creatures such as fiendish fire giants or blue dragons are used in the heavy artillery.

Light artillery is made up largely of barbazu and erinyes. Erinyes archers hover directly above the barbazu crossbow men, creating a wall of arrows. Each light artillery platoon is defended by a single squad of infantry. The squad sets up a wall of spears or glaives and the archers fire over and through their ranks.

### Typical Artillery Units

Squad: Barbazu (5), erinyes (4).

Platoon: 9 squads led by erinyes sergeant and hamatula lieutenant.

Battery: 9 platoons led by hamatula master sergeant and cornugon captain.

Battalion: 9 companies led by hamatula sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> circle major.

Regiment: 9 battalions led by cornugon command sergeant major and cornugon 9<sup>th</sup> circle major.

**Equipment:** Barbazu artillery are equipped with masterwork light crossbows and cold iron bolts. Erinyes carry standard equipment. Artillery officers typically carry hand crossbows and *wands of fireball*.

### Sample Artillery Platoon

#### **Barbazu (45)**

**Attack:** Masterwork light crossbow +8 ranged (1d8 19-20/x2)

**Full Attack:** Masterwork light crossbow +6/+6/+1 ranged (1d8 19-20/x2)

**Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload (light crossbow), Rapid Shot

**Special:** An barbazu artilleryman deals infernal wounds with its crossbow, just as a standard barbazu does with a glaive.

#### **Hamatula Lieutenant:**

**Attack:** +1 hand crossbow of distance +19 ranged (1d4+1 19-20/x2)

**Full Attack:** +1 hand crossbow of distance +19/+14 ranged (1d4+1 19-20/x2)

**Skills:** remove Search +16, replace with Use Magic Device +19

**Feats:** remove Cleave and Alertness; replace with Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hand crossbow) and Rapid Reload (hand crossbow)

#### **Erinyes (36): Standard equipment**

**General Hanariel (6<sup>th</sup> circle 25 HD pit fiend, fighter 14):** Hanariel is a swaggering, violent braggart of a fiend who loves little else than the destruction of demonic adversaries. He has little patience for the infantry or General Meritos. Indeed, Hanariel perceived Meritos as a simpleton and believes that the General of the Infantry is ripe for retirement, particularly if one of Hanariel's generals assumes his vacant station. Publicly, Hanariel does his best to appear conciliatory to the longer-serving Meritos. Hanariel is not as subtle as he believes and Meritos is well aware of his peer's attitude and intentions and has already bought off most of Hanariel's "loyal" servants. In due time, Hanariel may be the one facing retirement and Meritos will at last have the respect he believes he deserves. Hanariel views Alusiel and Srelial with something akin to awe, having known about the generals since Hanariel himself was a hamatula. He has spent considerable time contemplating the best means to give Srelial an honorable retirement, one that will allow the old pit fiend to die while doing great service for Hell. Hanariel obeys Dagos unquestioningly as he fears his immediate supervisor tremendously; he also despises him and believes that if he can eliminate Meritos and eventually the seemingly untouchable Srelial he may be in a position to even remove Dagos.

### Cavalry (General Srelial)

The infernal cavalry contains the mounted troops. Light cavalry is composed of narzurons and sometimes barbazu mounted on nightmares. Heavy cavalry is mounted on anything from creatures such as the gathra to infernal dire beasts, and has hamatula as well as the lesser ranked riders. Cavalry is used to follow up or support infantry charges, or in the case of heavily defended targets (more often found in skirmishes with angelic foes than with The Abyss), directly follow a lemure assault to punch a hole through which the infantry can follow.

A standard light cavalry squad tactic is the dual wedge charge. Two narzurons lead the charge leaving roughly 15 feet between them. Three others form the middle with four in the rear. The rows ride five feet behind each other, allowing the troops to the rear to target any survivors of the initial rush.

When assaulting a position that has spearmen set to receive a charge, the lead troops will often fight defen-

sively or use Combat Expertise to its fullest, knocking away the set attacks while their companions in the rear form the real offensive. In such cases, the dual wedge will often reverse, sending four horsemen in the fore, with two bringing up the rear.

Heavy cavalry mounted on an infernal dire elephant typically ride in a battle platform that allows them to fire arrows from relative safety. The platform provides  $\frac{3}{4}$  cover and allows eight Medium sized devils to fight from it. The ninth member of the squad rides near the beast's head, guiding it. The mounts usually charge the enemy, trampling anything in their path, while the riders make sure any survivors do not last long enough to threaten their mount.

#### Typical Cavalry Units

Squad (light): Narzagon with nightmares (9).

Squad (heavy): Barbazu (9) on infernal dire elephant.

Squadron: 9 squads led by narzagon sergeant and narzagon lieutenant

Company: 9 platoons led by narzagon master sergeant and narzagon 9<sup>th</sup> captain

Battalion: 9 companies led by hamatula sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> circle major

Brigade: 9 battalions led by cornugon command sergeant major and gelugon 9<sup>th</sup> circle major.

**General Srelial (7<sup>th</sup> circle 35 HD pit fiend, marshal 10):** The pit fiend Srelial is one of the oldest pit fiends serving in the Dark Ministry. He is also one of the deadliest, unsurprising considering his successes in the *War* and his longevity in spite of numerous retirement attempts from former subordinates and peers. Although he technically has no greater authority over the Strategic Branch of Land, Srelial is the de facto leader through sheer will. It is unclear if he has any desire to see Dagos retired; he seems content to reap the benefits of his lofty station and appears to respect the sterling military sense his superior exhibits. Although he does not know it, Dagos respects Srelial and pays attention to his suggestions; Dagos has standing orders to have Srelial killed in the event it ever appears that he involved in an early retirement attempt against the Marshal of the Pits. Srelial regards Hanariel as a fool who deserves no better than an early retirement, but suspects that the General of the Artillery is far trickier than he appears. He views Meritos with disdain, but knows that the General of the Infantry can be conniving and dangerous. Despite the respect he has for him, Srelial has little good to say about Alusiel, whom he perceives as a snob; he believes that Galarond is a more worthy leader for the Strategic Branch of Aerial Assaults, but suspects that Galarond could also be a far greater threat to his current status.

#### Infantry (General Meritos)

Despite popular belief, the typical infernal infantry grunt is not a lemure. Lemures (and nupperibos) are considered to be ammunition, not soldiers. Barbazu make up the lower level infantry, with companies led by hamatulas. Infantry are used to seize and hold military objectives.

The infantry moves in directly behind the initial lemure waves and makes short work of the wounded enemy. The infantry is more merciful than any other branch of the military; they make efficient killing their priority. Once they reach troops who have not suffered from the lemures' charge the infantry withdraws via teleport to

follow another wave. Infantry troops generally wait to summon aid until they have been reduced to a quarter of their hit points, the idea being that the summoned devils can finish the task that the soldier is about to fail through death. Infantry troops are allowed to withdraw for restoration once they are reduced to 5% of their hit points.

#### Typical Infantry Units

Squad: Barbazu (9).

Platoon: 9 squads led by barbazu sergeant and hamatula lieutenant.

Company: 9 platoons led by hamatula master sergeant and cornugon captain.

Battalion: 9 companies led by hamatula sergeant major and cornugon 1<sup>st</sup> circle major.

Regiment: 9 battalions led by cornugon sergeant major and gelugon 9<sup>th</sup> circle major.

#### **General Meritos (6<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend, rogue 15):**

Meritos is well aware of his peers' disdain and, to his fury, their attitude not only frustrates him, but he knows it is well earned. Meritos is dull and plodding when it comes to matters of combat strategy and tactics. His ascension this far is not due to brilliant concepts or strategy, but his willingness to throw more and more troops against his foes until the enemy falls. Fortunately for Meritos, Dagos has no qualms with this philosophy as the Marshal of the Pit sees lemures and nupperibos as not worth any concern. The problem lies with the fact that Meritos wishes he were more of a military leader despite his clear prediction for ferreting out secrets and removing adversaries through intrigue. Meritos knows he would be better off serving in the Infernal Denomination of Espionage or Morale, but believes that there is more glory to be found in Strategy. He is wise enough to keep more talented, but timid, subordinates around, but wastes no time in discrediting or causing the disappearance of those that would threaten his station. Meritos knows better than to do away with those who would offer great service to the Legions, though; in such cases, he typically arranges for them to be promoted out of his Branch into another (usually Ground Assault if he can help it). On the other hand, he is very good at discovering those who are a detriment to the Legions and ensures that they are either at the front lines or else are caused to disappear or lose face when a promotion is possible. Dagos is well aware of Meritos' scheming and his talents... and lack thereof. Dagos allows the general to continue his role because he values the unintended consequence of the General of Infantry's behavior: he wheedles out those unfit for their roles lower in the ranks where it counts. Thus, Meritos will remain where he is until his usefulness to Dagos is ended. To Meritos' credit, it is unlikely this will occur any time soon.

#### **The Strategic Branch of Sea (Admirals Kobbis, Laginus, and Meatus)**

The sailors of Hell's navy form a finely honed machine, keeping the massive warships of Perdition running and dangerous. Naval warfare is an often overlooked branch of the Denomination of Strategy, but is nevertheless an important one.

Naval units are broken up by number of ships rather than troops. Typical crews of war class ships (known as vessels) number roughly the equivalent of a battalion of

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land troops. Smaller destroyer class ships (known as detachments) are crewed by the equivalent of a company of land troops. Command ships can carry the equivalent of an entire regiment, and the massive flagships of the highest ranking admirals are manned by nothing less than a brigade-sized crew. This does not count any marine units stationed on the ship, which are typically one unit size smaller than the crew.

Another major difference in naval command and land forces is the command structure. While there is still a non-commissioned officer paired with commissioned officers, they are not as influential as their land-based counterparts. Instead, such influences fall with the First Mate, typically the second ranking officer.

By and large, the sailors within the Strategic Branch of Sea are the most loyal to each other among those serving in the Infernal Denomination of Strategy. Due to the incredibly dangerous nature of their missions, they have little patience for blatant in-fighting; however, they are still devils and do not overlook opportunities to damage the reputations of peers that make foolish decisions. They view the rivalry between the Branches of Air and Land as idiotic. After all, the devils of this branch know good and well that they are the most important instructors in the Ministry and do not care if they are not immediately recognized for their service so long as the job gets done.

Interestingly, despite the fact that barregons dominate the upper echelons of power in this branch, there appears to be little of their caste-wide treachery. This may be due to the fact that, unlike barregons elsewhere, those serving under Dagos are closely monitored and are generally more invested in the goals of Hell as a whole rather than those of the Prince of Stygia or Hell's Pawn. However, 3<sup>rd</sup> circle Admiral Dulahad has become a recognized threat to Dagos; while the Marshal of the Pits is not entirely certain of the Admiral of the Styx's activities, he knows (through both Corin and Zimimar) that the barregon is behaving in an extremely odd fashion and has quite a few barregons within the Denomination and beyond swearing fealty to him and to the Styx. Dagos plans on dealing with Dulahad once he establishes irrefutable evidence of his treachery and determines how tightly the Admiral's clutches are wrapped around his Denomination.

### Aquatic (Admiral Kobbis)

The submarines of Hell make up an elite force. They are often tasked with some of the most dangerous missions in the navy and hazard the soul-stripping waters of the River Styx.

Scuba troops swim along the bottom of waterways, attacking unprotected (or under-protected) ships. Such missions are hazardous for, although devils (like all fiends) do not need to breathe, most will suffer from amnesia just by touching the Styx while long-term exposure results in oblivion as the devils eventually forget they exist (which is the goal scuba troops hope to achieve against their foes). Missions that are in waters other than the Styx typically are to disrupt cargo and supply shipments, or remove large battleships without undue conflict.

Scuba troops swimming the River Styx rely on a number of protective spells and arcana to keep them from perishing in the hostile waters of the Depths Below. A long history of failures and experiments has perfected a variety of techniques and tools. The best known is a

**Table 6-5: Strategic Branch of Sea Unit Structure**

| Unit          | Unit Composition                          |
|---------------|---|
| Branch of Sea | As many Fleets as needed (typically nine) |
| Fleet         | 99 Forces and 1 Command Ship              |
| Force         | 99 Armadas and 1 Command Ship             |
| Armada        | 9 Flotillas and 1 Command Ship            |
| Flotilla      | 9 Battalions and 1 Command Ship           |
| Battalion     | 9 Squadrons                               |
| Squadron      | 9 Vessels                                 |
| Vessel        | War class ship crew and marines           |
| Detachment    | Destroyer class ship crew and marines     |

magic collar forged of adamantine and soulsteel which keeps the Styx at bay known as a *memory coil*. The *coil* provides immunity to any water based attacks, including *holy water*; however contact with *holy water* immediately neutralizes the *coil*, leaving the devil open to future attacks. Likewise, the *coil* may be damaged or disrupted through sundering or *dispel magic* and similar spells, making the scuba troop subject to the ravages of the Styx.

Submarines rarely *summon* aid due to their unique missions and equipment, but if combat erupts outside of the water, they have no compunction against *summoning*. Scuba troops are allowed to withdraw at any time that they see fit as their missions' successes do not always rely on dead enemy troops.

#### Typical Scuba Units

Detachment: Osyluth (9)

Platoon: 9 squads led by osyluth able hand and osyluth lieutenant

Squadron: 9 platoons led by osyluth petty officer and barregon commander

**Admiral Kobbis (7<sup>th</sup> circle 24 HD pit fiend, fighter 6/legendary captain 10/ legendary leader 5):** Kobbis' status is that of a rising star. Only recently was Kobbis promoted to the status of 7<sup>th</sup> circle admiral after having served for some time as a 1<sup>st</sup> circle barregon admiral and, for only a short 100 years, a 3<sup>rd</sup> circle pit fiend admiral. All this time she undertook some of the most dangerous tasks for Hell. Kobbis is a calm, silent leader, exuding professional certainty with her demeanor. Although she seems slow to react, Kobbis is always thinking and evaluating, considering the mettle of her servants and of her peers. She never hesitates to send her troops to their deaths if it means success, but sees no value in wasting lives or sending fools out for punishment as in dying, they may fail Hell. Kobbis is not cowed by the fact that the other two 7<sup>th</sup> circle corps leaders have served the Dark Ministry for untold millennia. She knows she has earned her station and does not fear them; still, she is not interested in making enemies of them and typically defers to their positions so long as they do not interfere with her missions. Of the two, Kobbis respects Srelial more as she finds Alusiel's obvious desire to retire Da-

gos a weakness that could (and eventually will) be exploited. She does not actively get involved with the decision making of the Admirals Laginus and Meathe, both of whom served longer than she. Rather, she watches patiently for the opportunity to embarrass them both enough to assume a de facto leadership role among the three. Kobbis respects Dagos greatly, but is fully in the pocket of Minister Zaebos.

#### Marines (Admiral Laginus)

Diabolical marines function very similarly to land-based infantry; it is fair to refer to them as “naval infantry.” Marines are the primary warriors in Hell’s navy and are responsible for taking coastal targets and forming boarding parties in the event of ship-to-ship fighting. Unsurprisingly, barbazu make up the bulk of marine forces with a fair amount of osyluths and some hamatulas; cornugons and barregons are frequently officers. A unit of marines one size smaller than the crew is a standard attachment for all ships; thus, a vessel is crewed by roughly a battalion, so it has an attached company of marines.

#### Typical Marine Units

Squad: Barbazu (9).  
 Platoon: 9 squads led by barbazu able hand and osyluth lieutenant.  
 Company: 9 platoons led by hamatula petty officer and cornugon commander.  
 Battalion: 9 squadrons led by hamatula chief and barregon 1<sup>st</sup> circle captain.

**Admiral Laginus (6<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, legendary dreadnaught 10, souleater 5, survivor 5):** A belligerent pit fiend, Laginus is considered one of the cruelest senior officers in the Ministry, no small feat for a devil. He does not just seek the destruction of enemy forces, he seeks to cause as much collateral damage as possible. He does not just seek to kill enemy targets, he hopes to capture prisoners and deliver them to the Infernal Denomination of Morale for processing. He does not hope to reeducate those opposed to Hell, he wishes to liquidate them. Even among his peers, Laginus is viewed with concern as he seems to consider ways to harm them. Laginus is a devil at a crossroads. Once a prisoner-of-war, Laginus realizes that what kept him from becoming a demon was his dedication to the teachings of the Ministry. He believes in Hell with his entire being and this belief has made Laginus as powerful force. If he were more focused and interested, Laginus could well be the best general under Dagos; however, he hopes to serve well for a few more centuries before seeking promotion opportunities to the Ministry of Morale where he believes he would be the most productive. He has no doubt that he would make an excellent Dark Minister and hopes that Zimimar is not as cagey as she appears to be. It is this distraction that keeps Laginus from getting involved in the intrigue among the senior officers of the Denomination of Strategy or even caring enough about them to have any strong opinions.

#### Sailors (Admiral Meathe)

Sailors are responsible for running war vessels. Typical tasks include manning cannons, navigating often treacherous waters, utilizing defenses during attacks, and general vessel upkeep.

Vessels can range in size from small strike craft to

large ships the size of small Mortal Coil lordships. Every vessel boasts a few spell-cannons and every sailor is expected to be proficient with them. Larger vessels also have shields that range from simple *protection from chaos/good* or energy to *spell immunity* and *spell reflections*.

Sailors *summon* aid immediately in the event of a boarding or as a precursor to a boarding in order to tip the odds in their favor as much as possible. There are no backlines in naval combat, so sailors fight to the death. After a battle is over, any survivors can seek medical attention.

#### Typical Sailor Units

Detachment: Small warship led by an osyluth 6<sup>th</sup> lieutenant with an erinyes 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant.

Vessel: Standard warship led by a barregon 6<sup>th</sup> circle commander with a osyluth 6<sup>th</sup> lieutenant.

Squadron: 9 vessels led by a barregon 6<sup>th</sup> circle captain with a barregon 9<sup>th</sup> circle commander.

Battalion: 9 squadrons led by a barregon 9<sup>th</sup> circle captain with a barregon 8<sup>th</sup> circle captain.

Flotilla: 9 battalions led by a barregon 6<sup>th</sup> circle commodore with a barregon 1<sup>st</sup> circle commodore.

Armada: 9 regiments led by a pit fiend 1<sup>st</sup> circle admiral with a barregon 9<sup>th</sup> circle commodore.

**Admiral Meathe (6<sup>th</sup> circle 26 HD pit fiend, fighter 7/marshal 6):** Meathe is in a very uncomfortable position. It has been during his long watch that one of his barregon admirals, Dulahad, has become more powerful and influential. Dagos has prided his Denomination for its loyal barregons and, if his suspicions are right, Meathe’s incompetence may have shattered this trend. For his part, Meathe believes he has suffered from incompetent or traitorous underlings and he is not far from the truth. Many of his lower ranking officers fear the Admiral of the Styx and refuse to get involved in whatever the barregon is doing even if it means the disgrace of their general. If it were not for Dulahad, Meathe would be a satisfactory commander, only slightly more productive than General Meritos. He knows that he has lost any support from the other generals and suspects that he will soon be retired. He is quite right for once Dagos uncovers the truth behind Dulahad, the Marshal of the Pit intends on making Meathe disappear.

### **Infernal Denomination of Supply (Dark Minister Baalzephon, Supply Master)**

#### **Branches**

*Engineer* – prepares the battleground to favor the Dark Mini

try; establishes defensive perimeters

*Quartermaster* – handles supplies and ensures units are properly equipped and outfitted

*Transportation* – oversees the movement of large, non-teleporting devices or troops

#### **Generals**

*Engineer* – Azabon, Farhisst, Gerrenck

*Quartermaster* – Carhmoc, Elhiak, Tel’Relial

*Transportation* – Lernok, Manhyn, Rassbal

The Infernal Denomination of Supply is arguably at

the center of the Ministry's operations. Without this Denomination, not only would the primary instructors of the Denomination of Strategy find themselves in dire straits, but the other Denominations would swiftly find themselves unable to accomplish their tasks. Espionage would not have access to tools essential to their trade; Research would not receive the components necessary to complete their projects; neither Immortal Diplomacy nor Mortal Relations would be able to ensure that their clients received their material requests. In short, Supply is the engine that pumps the oil throughout the diabolical machine that is the Legions of Hell and all diabolical soldiers know it.

The devils of Supply are among the most interesting in the Ministry. On the one hand, they are extremely organized, paying attention to the details of the contracts they receive, tending to the working orders of whatever wares they carry, and doing all they can to ensure that their charges reach their destinations in pristine condition (a relative term in Hell). On the other hand, the devils of Supply have no patience for non-devils, killing mortals out of hand when encountered and assuming that any powerful non-devils with whom they come into contact are an enemy intent on disrupting supply runs. Beings that encounter Supply soldiers must quickly reveal their allegiance to the Legions or risk immediate liquidation. Although no where near as disciplined as the devils of Strategy or even Espionage, those of Supply are vicious combatants that will go to great lengths to destroy threats to their missions.

As indicated earlier, this Denomination is extremely organized; indeed, it would not be unfair to say that the devils of Supply are obsessive-compulsive. They are meticulous to a fault, making it difficult for their peers to look forward to dealing with them. There are strict guidelines in place for every order, for every transport, for entry into every infernal warehouse; failure to adhere to these guidelines – convoluted even by devil standards – runs the risk of requests not being met. Even generals from other Denominations are loathe to deal with their peers in Supply; despite knowing that the rules exist for a reason (to ensure productivity and eliminate the risk of theft), the devils of other Denominations see those of Supply as possessing misplaced attention since they do not often offer instruction on the field. The troops of Supply tend to view all other Denominations in the same light: fools incapable of appreciating the importance of Supply's role and task. The only Denomination that the devils of Supply actively dislike are those of Promotion, particularly the agents of Logistics. The routine scrutiny of Supply logs and the persistent expectation for bribes has created greater and greater tension in the more recent centuries.

Baalzephon controls her Denomination with work orders, contracts, and routine inspections. She expects warehouses to be spotless, manufacturing facilities to be always at peak performance, and shipments to arrive in timely fashion if paperwork has been filled out properly. She is very involved in day-to-day operations, so much so that her generals know that she knows everything in which they are involved. The Supply Master has demoted and even executed those who have attempted to redistribute supplies to their own benefit, an irony considering that she routinely does the same. Fortunately for her, she is one of the original Dark Ministers and the most vocal of the group, so there is no one capable of second-guessing her. It has only been recently that Baal-

zephon has taken notice of the increased scrutiny from the Denomination of Promotion. To date, she has not addressed the situation with Minister Zaebos.

### **Engineer Branch of Supply (Generals Azabon, Farhisst, and Gerrenck)**

Diabolical engineers work under the auspices of the Infernal Denomination of Supply. They lay traps, establish defensive perimeters, and otherwise tailor the battlefield to meet the Ministry's needs. No demon charge is allowed unmolested access to a diabolical perimeter. Casualties are horrible, as the enemy is bogged down and slaughtered.

Traps, both magical and mundane, are the cornerstone of the engineers' work. Depending on the permanence of a base, a radius known as a kill zone may be prepared there around. Pit traps are common, particularly on Mortal Coil battlefields, but the best utilize sonic and fire damage, combined with *dismissal* or *banishment* effects. Proximity triggered *dictums* also find usage.

Devils of the Engineer Branch also erect physical barriers against demonic advancement. The engineers work closely with the operatives of Mystic Defense in these endeavors; while the engineers construct and erect physical obstructions, the mages enchant them with magic or supplement them with magical *walls*. Most of the walls are more than just physical barriers; some are filled with shrapnel, others are covered in acid, while others grow and change to react to assaults. These are set around camps and bases and sometimes are triggered to appear just before battle is met on the field. Of course, most demons can *teleport* past mundane obstacles, but the standard diabolical barriers are anything but; they are protected against *teleport* attempts through *delay teleport*, *divert teleport*, and other such wards. A demon carelessly teleporting within the boundaries of a diabolical establishment will find himself quickly in the hands of kocrachons and other researchers.

Just as the engineers fortify their own camps, they are called upon to penetrate the fortifications of the enemy. Sappers move through enemy territory, removing and avoiding set traps to pave a smooth path for the Denomination of Strategy to assault.

Wizards make up the largest class composition among the engineers, with rogues being found among the sappers. Both groups also find use for rangers and planar champions.

The skills required by the Engineer Branch include Craft (trapmaking), Disable Device, and Search. Sappers also have high ranks in Hide, Move Silently and Spot.

Most of the grunt work in the engineers is conducted by the hierrmagons, who have a knack for such things. They also make up the low level officers of the corps. Hamatulas excel as sappers, although plenty of hierrmagons are found here as well. All of the greater devils can be found in the higher echelons of command.

**General Azabon (7<sup>th</sup> circle 29 HD pit fiend, monk 16):** Azabon has been recently promoted as one of the High Distributors of Supply. Meticulous and well aware of his responsibilities, Azabon is also quiet and reserved. As the High Distributor of Engineering, Azabon signs off on all activities and orders, and works closely with the other High Distributors to ensure that his wares reach their destinations. Dedicated as he is to efficiency, he

does not appreciate new ideas unless they have been proven on the field and does not appreciate preemptive changes to systems... which results in little change in his organization. Those that would try new things must be certain of their success or else suffer severe punishments. Azabon does not entertain suggestions frequently, believing that he has reached his level of success on his own merits. Suggestions from the other two senior generals in Engineering are generally ignored, which has created nothing remotely close to a team environment between the three. Azabon could not care less as he does not believe he needs Farhisst or Gerrenck to do his job, but the longer serving generals have noticed that Azabon has done well and fear that he may be right more often than not and simply go with his orders. Baalzephon does not like him at all as he is so organized and so numbers driven that she has not been able to scrape off the top without drawing undue attention to herself. Azabon is well aware of Baalzephon's attitude if not the reasons behind it and does not really care as he knows she would be hard pressed to find a better High Distributor. Azabon also knows that if he continues to do well, he will continue to receive high commendations from Zaebos.

**General Farhisst (6<sup>th</sup> circle 28 HD pit fiend, scout 13):** While Azabon has recently become the High Distributor of Engineering, Farhisst has served as the Senior Distributor for millennia. He oversees designs of new physical barriers, large siege engines, and other creations helpful to education in the field. Given that he spends a great deal of attention to work orders and pours over material requests before setting to work, it would not be unfair to expect that Farhisst is as meticulous as Azabon. The reality contracts the impression as Farhisst spends as little time doing much work and rarely truly understands the orders he is given as he is not well-versed in such matters, relying heavily on his subordinates. In the distant past, Farhisst was significantly more competent, but he ran afoul of Raptilion centuries ago after his designs botched the ability for one of the general's operatives to safely reenter a fortified camp after a successful mission, resulting in the operative's capture and hemorrhaging of information (before Raptilion himself entered the demonic stronghold and destroyed the devil in question). In retaliation for this abysmal failure, Raptilion infected Farhisst with a wasting disease that has slowly sapped the Senior Distributor of his higher-level cognitive skills. Farhisst has no idea to this day why his ability to lead has soured, but he is now fearful for his continued position as Azabon and Baalzephon are beginning to notice how heavily he depends upon his subordinates (who have made certain that their formerly talented leader is utterly without support). It is probable that unless Farhisst determines what ails him that he will be given retirement. In the past, Farhisst was a shoe-in for the High Distributor rank; this of course, is no longer the case.

**General Gerrenck (6<sup>th</sup> circle 25 HD pit fiend, blackguard 17):** While Farhisst's incompetence is due to a unique wasting disease, Gerrenck's is due to feigned laziness. Having spent time in the Denomination of Supply since he was a barregon, Gerrenck has worked in every branch and has had many different responsibilities. In most cases, he has been extremely successful and experienced a fairly swift promotion track, in part due to

Zaebos' recent interests. Now, however, Gerrenck seems largely unmotivated to do much since he does not believe Azabon will ever give him the opportunity to flex his wings and show how well the Engineers would function if he were to take his advice. As the Senior Distributor and the liaison to Strategy and the other branches in Supply, Gerrenck is aware of the challenges the Engineers face under the scrutiny of others and he has ways to address those concerns. Unfortunately, Azabon is uninterested and Farhisst has revealed himself to be a half-wit. Gerrenck has come to the conclusion that he can feign laziness, thereby convincing Azabon that he is not a threat, at which point he will move to retire him. Considering Azabon's attitude regarding Farhisst and Gerrenck, the plan may just work. What Gerrenck does not know is that Baalzephon secretly hopes that he does make such a move as she doubts that Gerrenck would give her any trouble from her occasional fraud.

#### **Quartermaster Branch of Supply (Generals Carhmoc, Elhiak, and Tel'Relial)**

The Branch of the Quartermaster provides direct supply to the Ministry as a whole. They both produce and distribute weapons, armor, magical items, shelters, and everything else needed by the Legions of Hell.

On the production end, hierrmagons slave endlessly at their forges, beating iron and soul steel into finished products. Hierrmagon and erinyes wizards toil over projects, churning out *rings of electrical resistance, bracers of armor*, and other magic items. Souls are often used to pay the XP costs of these creations.

Distribution resembles a more militant operation. A platoon of quartermasters is attached to every troop regiment, and they pass on all issued equipment. Gaining the favor of a quartermaster is always beneficial to typical infantry or artillery grunts since their very existences may depend on the gear they are given. A company's attached quartermaster usually works with their master sergeant to determine what they need and how to obtain it. Quartermasters interact very closely with the Transportation Branch to make sure their own units are equipped to optimal performance. They also work directly with the Promotional Branch of Logistics; there are quite a few soldiers in the branch who spent time in the Denomination of Promotions.

Quartermasters place high priority on their bargaining skills. As such, Appraise, Diplomacy, Intimidate and Sense Motive are important (to get the best gear for their unit) as is Bluff (in case they *do not* get the best gear for their unit). The production end of the quartermasters obviously places the most emphasis on Appraise and Craft.

Quartermasters are usually composed of barbazu. Every so often there is an erinyes, although they are usually lieutenants. Hamatulas round out the lesser devils in the branch. As usual, the standard greater devils form the high ranking officers.

**General Elhiak (7<sup>th</sup> circle Order of the Bleeding Blade 35 HD pit fiend, spellthief 10):** Referred to as The Quartermaster, General Elhiak is one of the most influential generals throughout the entire Ministry. He is also one of the most hated and, as a result, highly protected general. Aside from Baalzephon herself, Elhiak is

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the final authority on all weapon and distribution orders. He is managing the overarching budget for the Hells, evaluating everything from the in-flow of distilled souls and magical components to more mundane items like precious metals and stones. He charges exorbitant prices for all orders, ensuring that of the three branches under Supply, he is the wealthiest. He has used his status to enrich himself and to dictate policy in other Denominations to ensure that he continues to profit. Although the 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals of other Denominations have all long since determined their own methods of dealing with Elhiak (paying him off under the table for their own pet projects and needs), lower ranking officers generally detest him and most have retirement plans in place to deal with Elhiak. Of the generals in Supply, Elhiak is the longest served and almost as old as Alusiel and Srelial. The Quartermaster is leery of his current subordinates, both of whom he views as gifted and talented, and therefore threats to his station. He knows that they are in the pockets of Zaebos and has informed Baalzephon as much. So far, though, they have done excellent jobs (unlike their predecessors who disappeared some time ago). He is a confidant of Baalzephon, which in part accounts for his longevity. He is unusually loyal to her largely because he has profited greatly from her leadership; for her part, the Supply Master respects The Quartermaster's control over his branch, its smooth operation, and its central importance to the entire Ministry. Baalzephon has gone out of her way to eliminate all threats to Elhiak's status.

**General Carhmoc (6<sup>th</sup> circle 26 HD pit fiend, blackguard 7/rogue 8):** Associate Quartermaster Carhmoc is charged with distribution of all items to the rest of the Ministry. He ensures that all orders reach their destinations in timely fashions and, unlike those that held the position prior, is willing to arrive in the midst of combat to deliver supplies to those that need it. During his tenure in the Ministry, Carhmoc served most of his time in the Denomination of Strategy, first in the Infantry and then among the Destroyers; thus, he knows the importance of swift response to those in the trenches. Still, he is a canny negotiator, determining who receives their orders based upon political and professional standing and interest offers. Carhmoc is a recent promotion, alongside Tel'Relial. Like the Associate Quartermaster of Production, Carhmoc is a favorite of Zaebos and is an excellent leader and tactician. His placement in Supply has already had both a monetary impact on the Denomination and has reaped significant improvements in efficiency and victory for the Denominations of Research and Strategy respectively. He works very closely with Lernok and sees a potential (and easily malleable) ally in the Master of External Distribution. His proven track record has made Elhiak and Baalzephon wary of Carhmoc, who is as yet unaware of the grafting in which his two superior officers partake. Carhmoc is not weighed down by integrity, though, and it is likely that if he finds out what his superiors are doing that he will offer a deal to benefit the three of them. While he perceives Tel'Relial as a potential ally, he cannot read his peer and, as a result, only deals with her in professional matters. His best allies are those in the Branch of Logistics.

**General Tel'Relial (6<sup>th</sup> circle 23 HD pit fiend, maester 5/wizard 11):** As the Associate Quartermaster of Production, Tel'Relial comes across more as a mem-

ber of Research than Supply. Utterly uninterested in monetary gain other than for the cause of generating orders, Tel'Relial is wholly interested in providing the best items for the Legions. A recent promotion by Zaebos, Tel'Relial is well aware of Baalzephon and Elhiak's activities, but could not care less so long as their proclivities do not interfere with her productivity. So far, she has kept her knowledge to herself, but has collected enough evidence to use if she deems necessary. Tel'Relial has no interest whatsoever in Carhmoc; although she recognizes his talents and his popularity, she is too invested in her work to get involved in politics. Tel'Relial is on excellent terms with the Denomination of Research, having once worked therein. She hopes to eventually return to Research as a 7<sup>th</sup> circle general over Mystic Defense. Since her tenure in Production, Tel'Relial has become a scourge to her subordinates, expecting superb results from them. She has increased quotas and has established production requirements for promotions. While her subordinates detest her, they are too busy to contemplate means to retire her... something neither Elhiak nor Baalzephon would allow just yet as she has been remarkably efficient.

### Transportation Branch of Supply (Generals Lernok, Manhyn, Rassbal)

While all true devils have the luxury of *teleporting* at will there still exists the need to move large items and the non-teleporting troops over long distances. The Branch of Transportation addresses these needs.

Large equipment covers the wide variety of siege engines, infernal beasts, and battle wagons of which the Legions of Hell make use. Non-teleporting troops may be fire giants, infernal petitioners, dragons, or undead soldiers in the employ of Hell.

*Teleportation circles* and *gates* are utilized, but the arcane power required to create such things renders them a viable option only for the most important of missions. Air transport, using dragons or platforms hauled by particularly strong (advanced) malebranche are only slightly more feasible. Dragons tend to disdain being used as beasts of burden and malebranche are hardly noted for their swiftness on the wing. Land crawling caravans have their purpose but only for basic supplies and ammunition. Most demeaning of all is the back and forth teleporting of fifty pound packages and crates of equipment.

Most members of the Transportation branch are wizards, sorcerers or psions with access to *teleport*, *greater teleport*, and the like. Many possess levels in the wayfarer guide prestige class (the class is known as the infernal transporter to devils and enhances their innate *teleport* spell-ability, removing the "self only" limit to their power in addition to the other benefits.). Some operatives are also self-proclaimed "clerics of Baalzephon" who access the Travel and War domains. Of course, they draw their power from traditional divine sources, and not the pit fiend herself, but this indulgence has stroked the blacklisted Minister's ego somewhat and has not drawn the ire of the other Ministers or the Courtiers of Perdition.

Lower ranking members, such as those who escort the caravans, usually have access to *expeditious retreat*, *haste* and more advanced versions of such spells that last longer or affect more targets. Extend Spell is a common metamagic to find among the lower ranks.

Devils of nearly every type can be found in the transportation branch, although erinyes and gelugons make up the bulk of those with classes. Barbazu and spinagon are utilized for the fifty pound crate transport, and malebranche are used as both aerial transport and caravan guards. Only osyluth and barregon are seldom found in the branch.

**General Rassbal (7<sup>th</sup> circle 29 HD pit fiend, fighter 16):** Rassbal, the Headmaster of Transportation, is a gruff devil who has spent most of his immortal existence within castes not known for their intelligence or personality, namely barbazu and malebranche. As a pit fiend, this continues to be reflected as Rassbal rarely has much to say and is very direct in his management of transportation... Or so it would seem. In reality, Rassbal is extremely intelligent and very observant. He has served for some time as the Headmaster of Transportation, but has long been in the pocket of Zimimar who hopes to collect as much information as she can on Baalzephon and El-hiak, both of whom she suspects of embezzlement. While Rassbal has no idea what Zimimar would do with the information gained, he does know that his time as her mole is swiftly drawing near and fully anticipates being highly rewarded for undertaking such a dangerous mission for so long. Within the Denomination of Supply, Rassbal is respected for his forceful demeanor and control over his subordinates, but for little else. The other 7<sup>th</sup> circle generals are sure to treat him well as they know that he has considerable influence over the delivery-side of their operations, but otherwise have little use for him. This suits Rassbal well as he cannot afford to give the impression that he is more interested in their activities than he otherwise should be. What Rassbal does not know is that Manhyn is also on Zimimar's payroll and has been watching the Headmaster in turn. Fortunately for Rassbal, he has not engaged in any improper behavior and an appropriate reward is likely.

**General Lernok (6<sup>th</sup> circle 27 HD pit fiend, fighter 5/infernal transporter 3/rogue 5):** Lernok is the Master of External Transportation, ensuring that large item supplies arrive to locations beyond Hell. He works very closely with Carhmoc in delivering materials, even agreeing with the aggressive Associate Quartermaster to ship in the middle of battles directly to the front. Lernok is boisterous and down-right unpleasant. He has personally executed those who have failed to ship essential items as he has no patience for failure. This brutality does not sit well with Baalzephon, but she cannot deny the productivity of his troops. Her concern is that eventually Lernok will face a full-fledged revolt and she cannot afford this to happen. She has yet to make her concerns clear to him as she wants to make sure that there is a worthy successor in the event she needs to remove or retire him. Lernok admires the terse Rassbal and hopes to one day replace him as the Headmaster of Transportation. He has no love for Manhyn, whom he views as a lightweight with a simple responsibility.

**General Manhyn (6<sup>th</sup> circle 26 HD cerbremancer 4/psion 6/sorcerer 6):** As the Master of Internal (or Infernal) Transportation, Manhyn sees to large shipments to locations within Hell. He often finds himself organizing large transports for each of the Perditions and their numerous Ministry sites each day, a job that requires a great deal of time and attention as errors could easily

offend the various Courtiers of Perdition who dislike interruptions at their keeps. The Bronze Citadel, Dis, Abriymoch, Tantlin, and Malsheem are the locations that receive the most frequent visits from Manhyn's troops and he has taken pains to establish excellent ties with the various governors and low ranking nobles who continue to have interests in the *Blood War*. The only place in which he rarely sends shipments are Cania; Raithetarkon dislikes him for an ancient sleight and sees to his own methods for receiving large-scale shipments. An otherwise crafty negotiator, Manhyn has been extremely successful in his job, a position he undertook through the support of Zaebos and the secret guidance of Zimimar. Manhyn has been tapped by Zimimar to spy on Headmaster Rassbal, although she has not bothered to inform Manhyn as to why. Thus far, Manhyn has found nothing inappropriate in the Headmaster's behavior and perceives him to be somewhat of a dimwit. He likewise is bemused by Lernok's status. However, Manhyn has noticed occasional irregularities in his reports and is slowly beginning to become concerned that he is being set up. What he does not know is that Baalzephon herself has adjusted his records to her own benefit. Manhyn has yet to approach Zimimar with his fears and is not entirely sure he wants to implicate himself without having more information.

## The Dark Ministers

The Dark Ministers of Hell are among the most powerful devils in Hell and certainly the best known devils to those familiar with the spirits of the Cosmos. Their interests have a far greater impact on the live of mortals and immortals than the Courtiers of Perdition largely due to their involvement in the *Blood War*. While the Dukes of Hell vie over their place in Hell's politics and with time-consuming plots with mortals in the material plane, and while the arch-devils and Lords of the Nine attempt to subvert the direction of mortal lives and the wills of the gods and other cosmic entities over the course of millennia, the Dark Ministers are involved in the day-to-day activities of a war that, for all points and purposes, is waged in order for the victor to claim the right to dictate the nature of Evil. The Dark Ministers decisions often have far more relevance to the lives of mortals as devils compete directly for their souls not just in the material plane, but in the devils' interactions across the Cosmos.

The Dark Ministers are not members of the Courtiers of Perdition. They are not nobles in any sense; rather, they are purely military beings, dedicated to fulfilling the mission The Overlord of Hell established for them. They are committed to the reeducation of all other fiends, intent on purging them of the degrading nature of Chaos and the wasteful selfishness of Neutrality, and they pursue this commitment, ostensibly, with little concern for Hell's politics. This is, of course, the superficial view. While they are not nobles, the Dark Ministers wield political clout just shy of that possessed by the Dukes of Hell and they far outstrip the authority of lower-ranked nobles. In this regard, as a group they have contacts and access to supplies and armament on par with any one of the Lords. They can influence the lower rungs of a Lord's retinue and they know which noble servants to approach for additional information or assistance. Such actions, though, are not taken lightly and usually require the majority agreement of the Ministers. Even those branches with open lines to the Dukes of Hell

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are reviewed every three years to ensure that they continue to meet Ministry needs without getting overtly (not overly) involved in the politics of Court.

One thing the Dark Ministers do not do is play favorites with the Courtiers. After all, the Dark Ministry was established with devils from different Perditions who partook in the defeat of sitting Lord-Regents and this foundation continues to impact how the Dark Ministry functions in relation to the Courtiers. Even Bael, the warmongering Lord of the First, is not accorded any special accord beyond that of the other Lords (he is simply, out of courtesy given his dedication to the *Blood War*, included in most communiqués). This, more than anything, allows the Dark Ministry to function without having to worry about outside influences. Despite the desire not to appear inappropriately involved with the nobility, the Dark Ministers are far more interested the success of devils in the *Blood War* than offending nobles; they will not hesitate to issue orders that conflict with those of a Duke or even a Lord of the Nine (save Asmodeus himself) if they believe their decision will move the Legions of Hell closer to victory. The Dark Ministers exist in an odd position, then, within Hell; they are powerful and non-political, but possess no little influence in a political environment.

The Dark Ministers themselves meet often and always in Malsheem, the largest fortress in the Cosmos located on the deepest rift of Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Perditions and home of The Dark One, Asmodeus. At least every three months, the Dark Minister conference in order to ensure that their respective Denominations are in sync with the dominant campaigns of the *War*. These meetings are professional and efficient; they are recorded in their entirety and referred to as necessary. The pit fiends show no love for each other, but historically respect each others positions... at least on the surface. Other beings are not allowed to enter these proceedings without the agreement of a majority of the Ministers (they may call upon The Dark One to break ties, something they are loathe to do). In most cases, the Dark Ministers allow their cohorts and/or favored aides to attend; such creatures do not speak unless given leave to do so by their master. On extremely rare occasions, non-devils have been allowed in on meetings, often emissaries of powerful creatures or else those who have important information to share with the Dark Generals of Hell. Although he is under no obligation to do so, The Dark One typically meets with the Ministers thrice per year and only to keep up to date on the happenings in the field (information he is already aware of and typically does not care much about).

Despite the appearance of a unified front among the Dark Ministers to 99% of the Legions of Hell, there are factions within the coven and, while each Dark Minister firmly believes that his or her opinion will help ensure Hell's victory, these factions often have as much to do with final decision as not. There are essentially two large camps that have nothing to do with politics or even Denominational parallels, but more upon personal preference (the closest to friendship among the pit fiends). Ostensibly, Baalzephon is the most vocal and influential of the eight, her tenure among the group, the success of the Infernal Denomination of Supply, and her own personal enrichment all granting her the greatest impact in the group. Aside from Furcas, the others fear to offend her as they know that the efficiency of their duties rely heavily on her pleasure. While Baalzephon would never

do anything to severely hamper the Legions, she would ensure that a sitting Minister was so thoroughly proven incompetent that he or she would be swiftly retired. She cannot conceive of any plots against her as the thousands before have failed (the only good thing about her being blacklisted as far as she is concerned). However, there is growing animosity towards the Supply Master and Zimimar is silently leading a charge against her.

In many ways, Zimimar has positioned herself as the second-most influential Dark Minister and the others have, largely in reaction against Baalzephon, flocked to her. Zimimar does not believe that the Dark Ministry can afford to have a single leader as the mandate handed down by Asmodeus dictates otherwise and she is uncomfortable with her growing authority given this fact. However, she has not stopped seeking alliances with the other Ministers and is dedicated to her investigation of Baalzephon.

The longest serving Minister after Baalzephon and Furcas, Zimimar is a deadly adversary and her station as the head of Morale – and the military police and dread inquisitors – gives her significant power. For millennia, it was professional courtesy that kept Zimimar from using her to investigate sitting Ministers, but she is slowly beginning to ignore the past as she is growing tired and suspicious of the Supply Master. She has already placed some spies in the upper ranks of the Denomination of Supply with help from Zaebos, the Minister of Promotions. Zimimar has taken advantage of Zaebos' overtures for an unsaid alliance in promoting cornugons, barregons, and gelugons. Ironically, Zimimar is also wary of Zaebos. She has noticed some strange developments since the Ministers unanimously agreed to a change in the promotion policy which granted the individual Denominations promotion rights over all lesser devils while the Ministry of Promotions handled greater devils. Zimimar now fears that this was a mistake and has approached Furcas with as much. Although Zimimar is uninterested in creating intrigue among the Dark Ministers, she has found herself reporting a great deal of information to Furcas, the most respected of the Ministers. Zimimar also finds that she works closely with Corin. Although she hardly trusts the Spymaster, Zimimar knows that aspects of her job cannot function without him. Corin, who keeps to himself, is well aware of how Zimimar is witlessly increasing her station; having no problem with a single leader among the Ministers and uninterested in such a lofty position at this time, he would support Zimimar if she were to grab the reigns of power.

Dagos, Pearza, and Zapan tend to remain on the periphery of the slowly simmering intrigue in the Dark Ministry. Dagos would rather fight and only speaks when necessary in coven meetings. Still, he is also growing weary of Baalzephon and it is likely that once Zimimar is aware of his displeasure, she will approach him on the matter. Zapan, a former general under Furcas, sees himself as the next true leader within the Ministry. Fortunately for him, he is too invested in his Denomination and with his occasional, secret meeting with Asmodeus for his intentions to be clear to the others. Although he has no love for Baalzephon, Zapan recognizes her status and defers to her. He has no idea of Zimimar's growing block of support.

Pearza is the one devil that is truly benefiting from Zimimar's investigations. As her interest in the *Blood War* is based upon continuous access to research speci-

men and materials, she is something of an aberration among the eight. In the past, her kind would have been swiftly retired, but the distractions caused by Zimimar have allowed her to not only flourish, but for her Denomination to greatly impact the Legions efficiency.

Furcas, his eyes on an all but guaranteed place in the Court of Dis, has historically allowed Baalzephon to dominate Ministry proceedings. He continues to ignore Zimimar's protests regarding the Supply Master (who he comes as close to liking as possible), but is concerned over her suspicions with Zaebos as he too has noticed some strange developments in Promotions. Furcas, for his part, sees Zimimar as potentially taking control of the Dark Ministry; given that the Ministers are technically all equals and has worked as a committee since the death of Cantrum, he is not certain he likes the possibility but is far less concerned about this now than would have been thousands of years ago.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Dark Ministry is the fact that only two of the original nine continue to serve, Baalzephon and Furcas. The first to leave the Ministry was the greatest of the nine, Cantrum. Cantrum is often credited as being the first devil approached by Martinet and the former Marshal of Nessus who supposedly turned coat on Asmodeus and fled to serve under Geryon, the Lord of the Fifth before the *Dies Irae* (now revealed to have been a ploy orchestrated by The Overlord). One of the greatest pit fiends (and possibly a Nessian pit fiend), Cantrum became the *de facto* leader of the Dark Ministry by virtue of his political and personal status and led the now defunct Infernal Denomination of Command, the bureaucracy that oversaw the entirety of the Ministry and maintained ties with the Court of Nessus. Unfortunately, Cantrum was destroyed a mere century after the Dark Ministry was established.

There are two dominant legends that relate Cantrum's demise. The most popular says he was destroyed when a powerful paladin led an army of angels into Hell. Ra-Than was this paladin's name and he was tricked by demons to descend into Hell to destroy all nine of the Dark Ministers. Through will, the blessings of his gods, and inconceivable luck, he was able to descend deep into Nessus where he met the Dark Ministers face-to-face. Even as the remnants of his army were destroyed by the waves of devils the Ministers summoned, Ra-Than charged directly for Cantrum and plunged his enchanted dagger into the pit fiend's chest. While some legends claim he was swiftly killed by the remaining Ministers and others suggest that he escaped (and would later be destroyed by the Demon Prince of The Undead, Orcus), all agree that he succeeded in destroying Cantrum.

The other legend, promoted by many lower ranked devils (who cannot conceive of a mortal killing one of the Dark Ministers), suggests that a rogue squamugon, again tricked by demons, backstabbed Cantrum with an enchanted dagger. Whatever the truth, after Cantrum fell, the Dark Ministers witnessed an amazing and deplorable reaction: a tremendous loss of morale among the troops. They found that the presence of eternal leaders in a vein similar to that of the Lords of the Nine was essential in maintaining dedication to imposing the right of Hell upon Creation and reeducating the Cosmos. After the brief period of insurrection that followed Cantrum's destruction was brutally put down, the Dark Ministers devised a plan. They displayed the dagger of Ra-Than (as the assassin's weapon came to be called) for 1001 days before Malsheem during which time every

single warrior in Hell had to pass before it. During the ceremony, the Dark Ministers guaranteed that never again would a single Dark Minister perish until the mission of the Legions passed to the devils by The Overlord was achieved: the reeducation of Creation under the gospel of Hell. So fervent was the need to believe in something that since the *1001 Days of Confirmation* that all devils subconsciously accept that there are never new Dark Ministers that replace old ones. Any suggestion that a Dark Minister has died or has been retired guarantees the accusation of treason and the casting of the perpetrator in the Pit of Darkness.

Devils, being what they are, still strive to overthrow their leaders. A devil that knows the laws, how to manipulate them, and knows that it could do an equal, if not better, job than a superior will always seek to take control of any organization. It is possibly this fact that allows powerful devils, usually pit fiends of 4<sup>th</sup> circle general ranking and higher, to conceive of the possibility of retiring a Dark Minister. In their souls, they effectively assume the station of the Minister, replacing only the person, not the integrity of the position. It is the status of eternal tyranny that these pit fiends seek to maintain. In this way, insufficient or foolish Dark Ministers can be removed, allowing more talented Ministers to assume the role. When a former Dark Minister is retired or, more rarely, promoted into the Courtiers of Perdition, the remaining Ministers find the best suited branch lead within the departed pit fiend's Denomination to replace him. Revealed with the truth and the importance of the lie, the replacement (often the devil responsible for the retirement) assumes the name of the original Dark General. If any devils notice the obvious changes in mannerism, attire, and/or gender designation, they subconsciously meld the new behaviors into their expectations and no one knows any different. So pervasive is this power of belief that it has flowed out into the rest of the Cosmos. Only a few spirits seem capable of recognizing different Ministers (angels, 20+ HD outsiders, and all daemons interestingly enough).

Despite the intrigue that will forever plague the Dark Ministry, the members of this group remain the most dangerous and politically powerful pit fiends in the Cosmos because they are all equally committed to Hell's victory. While the primary focus is always the war effort, the Ministers are always arranging alternative plots to bring about Hell's victory all the faster. The most recent is something called *The Bringing*. The Dark Ministers know that there is something grand and powerful deep within the Pit of Darkness at the bottom of Malsheem. They believe that whatever remains hidden in the depths of Hell will require special enticement to be drawn forth and, upon arriving, will lead Hell to total victory over The Abyss. To this end, the Ministers have been collecting billions of lemures (not larvae despite some reports). These are not just any lemures; they are those of especially powerful mortals or, and preferably, those goodly mortals who were cursed (or *accursed*) into lemures. Once the Dark Ministers reach an inconceivable number of such lemures (possibly 999 trillion), they will sacrifice them all in a terrible eldritch display. The collection of these souls is slow going since the Dark Ministers, particularly Dagos, know that they need a steady supply of ammunition and potential troops and that they compete with the Courtiers of Perdition for new souls.

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What is amazing about *The Bringing* is not a single one of the Dark Ministers have any idea of the truth of Asmodeus nor have they been given any clues by The Overlord. Delighted with these events, Asmodeus has done nothing to indicate any special interest in their activities, anticipating that this will keep prying eyes away from their plot.

## **Baalzephon, Supply Master** **Dark Ministry of Hell**

**Pit fiend (9th Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**

**Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Seal:** A gold coin resting on a tongue protruding from red, feminine lips a black inverted triangle.

**Rogue 5/Toll Warden 10**

**Hit Dice:** 37d8 + 15d6 + 520 (739 hp)

**Initiative:** +21

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 58 (-1 size, +8 armor, +13 Dexterity, +23 natural, +6 deflection), touch 27, flat-footed 58

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +45/+62

**Attack:** Claw +58 melee (2d8+13)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +58 melee (2d8+13) and 2 wings +56 melee (2d6+6) and bite +56 melee (4d6+6 plus poison and disease) and tail slap +56 melee (2d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, demand toll, fear aura, greater collect, improved grab, spell-like abilities, *summon devils*, sneak attack +6d6

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 20/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, immunity to fire and poison, master of misappropriation, resistance to acid 30 (20), cold 30 (20), electricity 30, and sonic 30, regeneration 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 49, telepathy 300 ft., tincture of treasure, trap finding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, weigh the wealth

**Saves:** Fort +38, Ref +41, Will +44

**Abilities:** Str 37, Dex 36, Con 31, Int 27, Wis 28, Cha 28

**Skills:** Appraise +52, Balance +15, Bluff +60, Climb +34, Concentration +31, Decipher Script +20, Disable Device +37, Diplomacy +33, Disguise +54 (+60 when acting), Forgery +52, Gather Information +35, Hide +50, Intimidate +40, Jump +38, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (nature) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +48, Knowledge (religion) +30, Listen +58, Move Silently +68, Perform (oratory) +20, Search +54, Sense Motive +47, Sleight of Hand +47, Spellcraft +36, Spot +64, Survival +9 (+13 on other planes, +15 tracking), Tumble +54, Use Rope +15.

**Feats:** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Deft Hands, Diligent, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability (greater teleport), Skill Focus (Appraise)

**Epic Feats:** Additional Ring Space (x2), Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Epic Will, Superior Initiative

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Unique (Solitary), with bodyguard (Gelverted), or troupe (3 pit fiends, 9 cornugons, and 18 erinyes)

**Challenge Rating:** 37

**Treasure:** Possessions plus triple standard

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

One of the two original members of the Dark Ministry, Baalzephon stands with Furcas as the most influential. As the Supply Master of the Legions of Hell, Baalzephon makes sure that Hell's armies are equipped with everything from weapons and magic items to souls for sustenance. And, like any devil, she sees to it that she scrapes enough off the top for herself.

Baalzephon's background is unclear. Some sources state that she was once a member of the Court of Dis, while others say she was low ranking general in the Court of Minauros. Either location would have suited her talents, as Baalzephon excelled in tracking down and acquiring items of great power for her superiors as well as tracking down potentially lucrative mortal souls.

Greed is the nature of the Supply Master. Her covetousness rivals that of Mammon, so most scholars tend to associate her with the Lord-Regent of Minauros. At some point in the distant past right before the Dies Irae, Baalzephon crossed Mammon. Although many suspect that it is her station in the Dark Ministry that has stayed Mammon's hand, the truth is that the Lord of the Third himself has actively seen to it that Baalzephon is kept alive. Mammon has decided that the best punishment for Baalzephon is to rob her of what she currently most desires: promotion into the Courtiers of Perdition. Effectively "blacklisted," Baalzephon will seemingly remain a member of the Dark Ministry for eternity, never to receive recognition for her services. Repeated overtures to Mammon by Baalzephon have been ignored as the Lord of Greed seems dedicated to his revenge.

Despite her plight, Baalzephon remains a powerful presence among the Dark Ministry. Her control of the supply lines ensures that her words are taken very seriously. In fact, in many ways, Baalzephon is the most influential of the Ministers, regularly issuing her opinion and always scraping a great deal aside for herself. The others, save perhaps Furcas, despise her and await the day she is either finally promoted (since Mammon has not publicized her situation for some reason known only to him) or "retired" (something that will not happen unless Mammon or Asmodeus allow it).

Baalzephon shares physical traits of a traditional pit fiend and an erinyes. She has the shapely, attractive general form of an erinyes, complete with lacquered claws, stately yet seductive gowns, and modest but expensive jewelry. However, she is bald, has the long, serpentine tail, hoofed feet, great wings, and horns of a pit fiend; her fangs are usually, but not always, concealed.

### **Combat**

Baalzephon loathes fighting. She prefers to rob and steal. In most cases, if combat appears imminent, she will summon a pit fiend before teleporting or planeshifting away to safer environs.

However, if someone steals from her or she finds herself trapped, Baalzephon reveals that she is a terrible adversary. She will open up with a *meteor swarm* and then *summon* reinforcements. She will then unleash *greater dispel magic* and *blasphemy* attacks, followed by *mass hold monster* and *power word stun*. Then, if her enemies are still standing, she will activate her *ring of sequestering* and attempt sneak attacks and cast *fireballs* centered on her person. Those who appear to detect her despite her *invisibility* are targeted by *greater dispel magic* and another *meteor swarm*. In all cases, Baal-

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zephon seeks to place as many other devils within the path of her enemies as possible.

**Constrict (Ex):** Baalzephon deals  $2d8 + 26$  points of damage with a successful grapple check against Medium or smaller creatures.

**Demand Toll (Sp):** 3/day, Baalzephon can command that an item or sum of money be surrendered to her. This affects a single target within range of her voice, who is then entitled to a Will save (DC 29). Failure causes the victim to be dazed for 1d3 rounds and surrender the item or money. Success simply causes the victim to be dazed for 1d3 rounds. A creature gains a +4 bonus on their save if their most valuable possession is demanded, and a +2 bonus if their second most valuable possession is demanded. Due to Baalzephon's Master of Misappropriation special quality, she can continue making demands on a creature's wealth until they fail a save, although the Will save DC decreases by 1 every round. This is a mind-affecting, language dependent ability.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Baalzephon's bite attack must succeed at a DC 38 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called *devil chills* (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of temporary Strength).

**Fear Aura (Su):** Baalzephon can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 37 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 37th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by her aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Greater Collect (Su):** Baalzephon can always take 10 on Sleight of Hand checks. Furthermore, she can take items one size larger than normal, and hide them on her person as a supernatural ability.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Baalzephon must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with her tail slap attack. If she gets a hold, she can constrict.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 38; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Baalzephon takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead*, *blasphemy*, *charm person*, *create undead*, *desebrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *locate object* (items possessed for at least three hours only), *magic circle against good*, *major image*, *mass hold monster*, *power word stun*, *produce flame*, *polymorph*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *unholy aura*, *unhallow*, and *wall of fire*; 3/day – *meteor swarm* and *symbol of pain*; 1/week – *discern location* (touched object only); 1/month – *wish*. Caster level 37th; DC 19 + spell level.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Thrice per day, Baalzephon can automatically summon four lemures, osyluths, or hamatulas; or two erinyes, cornugons, gelugons, or pit fiends.

**Tincture of Treasure (Su):** Baalzephon constantly detects anything of monetary value. By concentrating on the effect (a move equivalent action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity), she can discover more information. The first round (always active) allows her to ascertain whether there are objects worth more than 333gp in the vicinity. The second round shows her the approximate location and number of places where such wealth is kept. The third round gives an approximation of the value of the item(s), so long as Baalzephon suc-

ceeds on an appropriate Appraise check as a free action.

**Vanishing Vault (Su):** Baalzephon can access an extraplanar vault to store her wealth within. This vault functions similarly to a bag of holding, but there is no weight limit. A total of 100 cubic feet can be stored in Baalzephon's vault. The vault cannot be entered; its only purpose is to store items and effects until they are needed to be retrieved. The vault can be accessed as a standard action using the opening to any container or bag that is in Baalzephon's possession.

**Possessions:** As Supply Master of the Legions of Hell, Baalzephon has access to an incredible array of equipment. Within an hour she can obtain access to nearly any item she requires. She always wears four magical rings, usually a *ring of protection +6*, a *ring of blinking and freedom of movement*, a *greater ring of universal elemental resistance*, and a *ring of sequestering*. Her necklace functions as *bracelets of armor +8* and *moderate fortification*, and she always wears a *gown of scintillating colors* with no duration limit on its usage and a DC of 31 against its effects.

**Cohort:** Baalzephon is usually accompanied by her bodyguard, a cunning and relatively loyal hamatula known as Gelverted. (25 HD hamatula, fighter 20).

## Corin, Spymaster Dark Ministry of Hell

**Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**

**Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Seal:** Fiendish hand emerging from a pair of bat-like wings, all dark red, on a black inverted triangle

**Rogue 10/Epic Infiltrator 12**

**Hit Dice:**  $27d8 + 22d6 + 312$  (475 hp)

**Initiative:** +13

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 45 (-1 size, +13 Dexterity, +23 natural), touch 22, flat-footed 45

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +38/+55

**Attack:** Claw +50 melee (2d8+13)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +50 melee (2d8+13) and bite +48 melee (4d6+6 plus poison plus disease) and 2 wings +48 melee (3d6+6) and tail slap +48 melee (2d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, crippling strike, fear aura, improved grab, read thoughts, spell-like abilities, *summon devils*, sneak attack +9d6 (see below)

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 15/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, far senses, immunity to fire and poison, improved cover identity, improved uncanny dodge, mind blank, resistance to acid 15 and cold 15, regeneration 7, see in darkness, specialist training (concealment, espionage, interaction x2), spell resistance 47, telepathy 200 ft., trap finding, trap sense +3, uncanny dodge

**Saves:** Fort +34, Ref +39, Will +36

**Abilities:** Str 37, Dex 36, Con 27, Int 31, Wis 26, Cha 29

**Skills:** Balance +17, Bluff +67, Climb +34, Concentration +37, Decipher Script +28, Diplomacy +48, Disable Device +38, Disguise +67 (+73 when acting in character), Escape Artist +41, Forgery +59, Gather Information +64, Hide +59, Intimidate +60, Jump +34, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (nature) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +39, Knowledge (religion) +31, Listen +40, Move Silently +63, Open Lock +41, Perform (act) +13, Search +45, Sense Mo-

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tive +32, Sleight of Hand +37, Spellcraft +33, Spot +51, Survival +17 (+19 above ground, +21 other planes, +21 tracking), Tumble +42, Use Rope +13 (+17 with bindings), Use Magic Device +49

**Feats:** Arterial Strike, Combat Expertise, Hamstring, Improved Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Investigator, Leadership, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*blasphemy*), Quicken Spell-like Ability (*greater invisibility*)

**Epic Feats:** Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Epic Will, Lingering Damage, Polyglot

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Unique (Solitary), or squad (3 pit fiends, 9 gelugons, 27 osyluth)

**Challenge Rating:** 35

**Treasure:** Possessions plus triple standard magic items.

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

The Spymaster of the Dark Ministry, Corin is the most mysterious of his peers. A master of disguise and lies, there is very little of which Corin is unaware when it comes to matters concerning Hell. He has spies scattered across the Cosmos, from the lowest reaches of the endless Abyss to the sweet waters of Elysium. However, while the acquisition of information is important to Corin, his primary interest is the elimination of Hell's enemies.

Corin's background is a mystery. While it is known that he is the fourth "Corin" to serve as a Minister, it is unclear if his predecessors met with "accidents" or if they were promoted into the Courtiers of Perdition. Many believe that most, if not all, "Corins" came out of the Court of Maladomini, a place where intrigue runs thick. No one knows for certain; Corin's true background is even more difficult to ascertain because he happens to have a great rapport with both cornugons, devils typically identified with His Grace, Beelzebub the Lord of the Seventh, and gelugons, devils typically identified with His Grace, Mephistopheles the Lord of the Eighth. It is possible that both Lords are interested in currying the Spymaster's favor, perhaps grooming him for an eventual offer to join their courts. The truth of the matter is that Corin is fully in the pocket of the Dark Lord of Nessus, Asmodeus, and that he does as The Overlord of Hell commands... a rare occurrence considering that Asmodeus typically allows the Dark Ministry to do as it pleases regarding the *Blood War*.

Within the Dark Ministry, Corin is neither seen nor heard with any frequency. He provides a great deal of information to all Denominations in the Dark Ministry, particularly Immortal Diplomacy, Mortal Affairs, and Strategy. He intercepts communiqués from a variety of sources – largely military – and spies routinely on daemon mercenaries. Corin does not interfere with internal conspiracy situations, as that is the province of Zimimar, but he does get involved with the politics of the Courtiers of Perdition, giving information to Asmodeus himself if a powerful noble seeks to betray Hell.

Corin has many different shapes and forms. In a way, he is the most "chaotic" of the Dark Ministry, capable of employing numerous disguises within a short period of time. In meetings, he typically appears as a gaunt pit fiend with a long black cloak; none of his peers believes this to be his true form.

Corin actively avoids combat. If threatened, Corin is prone to teleport away immediately. If forced to fight, Corin's favorite method is to cast *greater invisibility* immediately, then attack. His first sneak attack is always an arterial strike, and his second always a hamstring. If foes can see him, he will always attempt a feint in combat. He will make ample use of his scale stored weaponry while maximizing his armor class through Combat Expertise, causing all manner of havoc with a wide variety of unexpected threats and remaining largely untouched himself.

If possible, Corin likes to lead unwary, angry foes into a pre-laid *symbol* trap, or into an area wherein he summoned a few devils. He is even likely to take the shape of a foe, attack a powerful creature in his new form, and then lead it to his enemies. In essence, Corin is the most unpredictable of the Dark Ministry in a fight, making him a difficult opponent.

**Constrict (Ex):** Corin deals 2d8 + 26 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Corin's bite attack must succeed at a DC 31 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Far Senses (Su):** 5/day, Corin can extend his vision or hearing into an area beyond his normal range, to a distance of 260 feet. He must have personally visited the area prior to using far senses on it. He may use this ability in conjunction with his *read thoughts* ability. This power otherwise functions as a *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell. (Caster level 32nd)

**Fear Aura (Su):** Corin can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 32 Will save or be affected as though by a fear spell (caster level 27th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by his aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Improved Cover Identity (Ex):** Corin has three active cover identities at any one time. Two are secondary covers, providing a +4 circumstance bonus on Disguise and a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Gather Information checks. The other is a primary cover, providing a +8 bonus on Disguise and +6 on Bluff and Gather Information checks. With the *Pool of Unbridled Thought*, Corin may 'retire' a cover identity in nine minutes, rather than a week.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Corin must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with his tail slap attack. If he gets a hold, he can constrict.

**Mind Blank (Sp):** Corin is constantly under the effects of a *mind blank* spell. (Caster level 32nd) Should this ability be dispelled, Corin may reactivate it once per day. The effect is automatically renewed daily.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 31; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Read Thoughts (Su):** 3/day, Corin may read the surface thoughts of any single creature he desires. This functions as the *detect thoughts* spell, except that it immediately reveals the surface thoughts of the creature. Caster level 32nd; DC 32

**Regeneration (Ex):** Corin takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Corin deals 9d6 additional damage and 2 points of Strength damage when he catches a foe who is flanked or denied his Dexterity bonus to armor class. This damage repeats on the following round.

### Combat

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Corin may sacrifice 1d6 points of damage to cause a bleeding wound, or 2d6 points of damage to reduce an opponent's speed in half.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead, blasphemy, charm person, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, greater dispel magic, greater invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good, major image, mass hold monster, power word stun, produce flame, polymorph, pyrotechnics, suggestion, unholy aura, unhallow, and wall of fire*; 1/day – *meteor swarm and symbol of pain*; 1/year – *wish*. Caster level 27th; DC 19 + spell level.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Thrice per day, Corin can automatically summon two lemures, osyluths, or hamatula; or one erinyes, cornugon, gelugon, or pit fiend.

**Possessions:** Corin possesses a sky-blue soul gem that contains the essences of several hundred beings called the *Pool of Unbridled Thoughts*. With this gem, he can access the memories and lives of the souls trapped within, greatly aiding him in establishing cover identities as described above.

A number of the Spymaster's scales have been en-spelled to produce various effects. Three scales on Corin's body can be activated to produce the effects of *haste, mirror image or deeper darkness* (caster level 25<sup>th</sup>). Each scale may be activated nine times per day as a swift action. Corin has several other enchanted scales on his body which function similar to *bags of holding* and *gloves of storing*. Accessing an item from a scale is considered the equivalent of drawing a weapon for Corin. Corin stores a wide variety of items in these scales, from *dancing swords to rods of wonder*. He has mundane items as well, such as caltrops, tanglefoot bags and self activating traps. One can be sure Corin will have any item for nearly every situation.

Corin's other item of note is the *Cloak of Uttervoid*. This jet black cloak provides Corin with a +20 bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks, and attacks directed at him suffer a 60% miss chance. Those who miss with melee attacks due to this effect suffer 10d6 points of cold damage and gain 1d4 negative levels; there is no save to avoid this effect.

**Cohort:** Belmhus (10 HD osyluth, assassin 24) is Corin's chief administrator and his personal assassin. He is extremely loyal and a former agent of the Order of the Fly.

## Dagos, Marshal of the Pits Dark Ministry of Hell

**Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**

**Huge Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Seal:** A gray war helmet bursting with red flames on a black inverted triangle

**Fighter 10/Legendary Leader 5**

**Hit Dice:** 39d8 + 10d10 + 637 (867 hp)

**Initiative:** +12

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 56 (-2 size, +8 Dexterity, +26 natural, +10 armor, +4 deflection), touch 20, flat-footed 48

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +42/+77

**Attack:** *Halberd of the Pits* +65 melee (3d8+35 plus 1d6 fire /19-20/x3 plus 1d10 fire)

**Full Attack:** +63/+58/+53/+48 *Halberd of the Pits* (3d8+26 plus 1d6 fire /19-20/x3 plus 1d10 fire) and +63/+58/+53 melee (2d6+16 /19-20/x2) and 2 wings

+54 melee (3d6+9) and tail slap +54 melee (3d8+9) or 2 claws +59 melee (3d8+19) and bite +54 melee (6d6+9 plus poison and disease) plus 2 wings and tail slap

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft. (30 feet with halberd)

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, fear aura, improved grab, quick rally, spell-like abilities, *summon devils*

**Special Qualities:** Command aura, damage reduction 20/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., fearless, Hell and back, heroic success, hero's luck, immunity to fire and poison, legendary reputation, natural commander, resistance to acid 20 and cold 20, regeneration 9, see in darkness, spell resistance 48, telepathy 300 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +42, Ref +37, Will +40

**Abilities:** Str 49, Dex 26, Con 36, Int 27, Wis 29, Cha 27

**Skills:** Appraise (weapons) +17, Balance +15, Bluff +47, Climb +39, Concentration +42, Diplomacy +43 (+48 vs. indifferent or better), Craft (weapons) +36, Disguise +29 (+33 acting), Escape Artist +25, Gather Information +17, Handle Animal +39, Hide +26, Intimidate +65, Jump +59, Knowledge (arcana) +37, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +42, Knowledge (religion) +30, Listen +53, Move Silently +34, Perform (oratory) +12, Ride +43, Search +37, Sense Motive +54, Spellcraft +41, Spot +53, Survival +35 (+39 on other planes, +39 tracking), Tumble +29, Use Rope +8 (+10 bindings).

**Feats:** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Greater Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (halberd), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Leadership, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*meteor swarm*), Spinning Halberd, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)

**Epic Feats:** Dire Charge, Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Legendary Commander

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Unique (Solitary), or squad (9 pit fiends and 27 cornugons)

**Challenge Rating:** 36

**Treasure:** Possessions plus triple standard

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

Dagos of the Dark Ministry is charged with maintaining the Legions of Hell. Referred to as "the Marshal of the Pit", Dagos is the most terrifying pit fiend to the hordes of The Abyss.

A brilliant tactician and a deadly warrior, Dagos and his stratagems have developed into legends across the Planes. Only some of the gods of war can compare themselves to Dagos when it comes to battle-plans and preparation, and some bards tell tales suggesting that were it not for their raw power, not even a greater god could outwit or outfight Dagos! Whether or not this is true or just a gross hyperbole, the vicious Marshal of the Pit has proven time and again why devils have held their own against the virtually limitless hordes of The Abyss.

What many do not know is that this is the third "Dagos." The original Dagos long since joined the ranks of the Courtiers of Perdition. The second Dagos was apparently obliterated by the Warlord Bael, Lord of the First, shortly after assuming his station. The third and current Dagos is the best known of the three and has

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served longer in this station than his predecessors. Rumors persist that the current Dagos was once a member of Bael's court and that much of what he knows he learned while he served under Bael. The current Dagos is known for his controlled bloodlust and unwavering passion to destroy the demons of The Abyss. Among the other Ministers, he is precise and direct, quickly coming to the point in arguments and offering pragmatic solutions. He is simultaneously the most involved and remote of the Ministers; while he does depend on the morale efforts driven by Zimimar, the advice and information provided by Corin, and research offered by Pearza, Dagos does not offer much in return other than fit and organized troops. He hates Dark Ministry meetings, finding them profound, wasted opportunities to destroy demons and their allies.

Among his subordinates, Dagos is both feared and respected. He knows precisely how to get the best out of every one of his warriors. Those who do well are rewarded but then expected to excel beyond their last success. Those who do poorly are severely punished. Those who are complacent are severely punished as well. Dagos expects and accepts only the best.

Dagos is a hulking pit fiend. Although translucent like all pit fiends, Dagos' body ripples with muscles and his entire body is always aflame, causing those unfamiliar with fiends to mistake him for an enraged balor. Dagos always wears the infamous *Helm of the Pit*, a helmet that covers his entire head although it has slots for his horns, and a grill around the face from which glow his white eyes; when he speaks, flames explode from behind the grill (the placement of the *Helm* robs Dagos of a bite attack, although they are included in the values above).

### Combat

Dagos prefers to strike adversaries on his own terms; if attacked during an ambush or when he is not expecting a fight, Dagos has no qualms about retreating immediately to prepare. In any event, he rarely fights alone and will collect a small group of fiends to assist him in combat.

If fighting demons, Dagos will typically have *greater invisibility* cast on his person; then he will attempt to *teleport* just close enough for his *meteor swarm* to engulf the greatest number of Abyssal foes. From here, he wades into battle attacking with the *Halberd of the Pit*. He will use the blade to attack the demons, and the adamantine shaft to sunder any weapons. Due to his *vambraces*, Dagos is treated as a Colossal sized creature and can easily overpower most foes with bull rush, disarm, or trip attacks. He makes use of these tactics as the situations arise, but for the most part he focuses on dealing as much damage in a single round to as many foes as possible. With up to ten attacks in a full round, Dagos is usually capable of striking all foes within his reach at least once.

Due to his commander auras, devils fighting with Dagos are much more formidable than normal. Foes who succumb to Dagos' fear aura are almost always dispatched by his troops, and those wounded are quickly finished off as well.

When fighting against mortals, Dagos will typically attempt to attack *invisibly*, although he will try to *charm* or *hold* arcane spellcasters so he can deliver them to Corin for interrogation. Against melee warriors, Dagos will concentrate on killing them as swiftly as possible, typically leading with *blasphemy* and *mass hold monster*

while his subordinates deal with them. Those who do not fall to the *blasphemy* or *hold* are usually disarmed and either subdued or slaughtered.

**Commander Auras (Ex):** Bloodthirsty and Pursuing. Allies under the effects of Dagos' command auras gain a +9 morale bonus on damage rolls against wounded foes, and a +9d6 morale bonus on damage rolls against foes who are frightened or panicked. Dagos' aura affects all allied troops within 270 feet of him, due to the *Helm of the Pit*.

**Constrict (Ex):** Dagos deals 3d8 + 38 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Dagos' bite attack must succeed at a DC 40 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Fear Aura (Su):** Dagos can radiate a 30-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 36 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 34<sup>th</sup>). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by his aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Hell and Back (Ex):** Dagos' cohorts and followers are immune to fear while they have line of sight to him.

**Heroic Success (Ex):** Once per day, Dagos may automatically succeed on a saving throw.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Dagos must hit a Large or smaller opponent with his tail slap attack. If he gets a hold, he can constrict.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 40; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Quick Rally (Ex):** Dagos may make a rally check once a round as a free action.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Dagos takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead*, *blasphemy*, *charm person*, *create undead*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good*, *major image*, *mass hold monster*, *power word stun*, *produce flame*, *polymorph*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *unholy aura*, *unhallow* and *wall of fire*; 3/day – *meteor swarm* and *symbol of pain*; 2/day – *greater command*; 1/month – *wish*. Caster level 34<sup>th</sup>; save DC 18 + spell level.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Thrice per day, Dagos can automatically summon four lemures, osyluths, or hamatulas; or three erinyes, cornugons, gelugons, or pit fiends.

**Possessions:** Dagos wields the *Halberd of the Pit*, a +5 demon-bane fiery bursting hellforge iron halberd. The shaft is shod in adamantine, rendering it significantly harder to sunder than normal. The shaft carries a +5 enhancement bonus, but no other enchantment.

*The Standard of the Marshal* is a simple banner bearing Dagos' symbol. It is carved on demon-hide and provides the effects of *protection from chaos* and *good* spell to all devils within 900 feet. Three times per day, the wielder of the *Standard* can activate a massive attack on all foes within 900 feet. This produces a combined *blasphemy*, *dictum*, *dismissal*, *order's wrath*, and *unholy blight* effect on all non-devils in the area. (Caster level 20<sup>th</sup>, DC 28)

Dagos wears his *Infernal Vambraces* which function as bracers of relentless might except that they provide a +10 armor bonus instead of Strength and Constitution

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enhancement. He also is armored with his *Warlord's Pauldrons* (gifts from Bael, Lord of the First) that provide both heavy fortification and weapon breaking (DC 20). His most impressive piece of armor, however, is the *Helm of the Pit*.

**Helm of the Pit (major artifact):** The *Helm of the Pit* was a gift given to the first “Dagos” by Asmodeus shortly after the *Dies Irae*. The *Helm* may only be worn by a devil of pit fiend or greater status; all other creatures attempting to wear the *Helm* must make a Fortitude save DC 54 (although crafted by Asmodeus, The Lord of the Nine did not empower the *Helm* with all of his power, thus the “low” DC) or die instantly as they are consumed by the *Helm’s* flames. Those who survive the immolation still suffer 22d12 points of damage every day they wear the *Helm* in addition to gaining one negative level. The *Helm* grants Dagos the following benefits.

- Continual shield of law (DC 25)
- +9 profane bonus to saving throws made against spells or spell-like abilities cast from the school of enchantment (unless such magic is cast by a Lord of the Nine, a stipulation of which Dagos is unaware).
- Permanent circle of fire. This acts similarly to a *wall of fire* except it is centered on Dagos and has a five foot radius. Any creature within 15 feet of the circle suffers 9 points of fire damage; those within 10 feet of the circle suffer 27 points of fire damage; those who pass through the circle or enter into melee combat with Dagos suffer 81 points of fire damage.
- Increases the range and effect of his command auras by a factor of nine.

**Cohort:** Dagos is often accompanied by his executive officer, a canny pit fiend named Retya (3<sup>rd</sup> circle general, 20 HD pit fiend, marshal). An advanced hamatula (9<sup>th</sup> circle lieutenant, 23 HD) from his followers is usually present as well as his herald and standard bearer.

## Furcas, Minister of Mortal Relations Dark Ministry of Hell

### Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)

#### Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)

**Seal:** An open book on red field with a quill pen superimposed on top on a black inverted triangle.

#### Fiend of Corruption 6/Fiend of Blasphemy 9

**Hit Dice:** 46d8 + 6d6 + 520 (748 hp)

**Initiative:** +12

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 49 (-1 size, +8 Dexterity, +23 natural, +9 deflection), touch 26, flat-footed 41

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +45/+63

**Attack:** Claw +58 melee (2d8+14)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +58 melee (2d8+14) and 2 wings +56 melee (2d6+7) and bite +56 melee (4d6+7 plus poison plus disease) and tail slap +56 melee (2d8+7)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, fear aura, improved grab, kill cultist, spell-like abilities, spells, *summon devils*, torture cultist

**Special Qualities:** Alternate form, blood oath, damage reduction 20/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., fiend’s favor, immunity to fire and poison, locate cultist, mind shielding, resistance to acid 20 and cold 20, regeneration 10, see in darkness, soul bargain, spell resistance 50, sponsor worshiper, telepathy 300

ft., temptation, transfer spell-like ability

**Saves:** Fort +38, Ref +36, Will +43

**Abilities:** Str 39, Dex 28, Con 31, Int 33, Wis 32, Cha 34

**Skills:** Appraise +30, Balance +11, Bluff +75, Climb +35, Concentration +52, Diplomacy +82, Disguise +69 (+75 acting), Gather Information +44, Hide +22, Intimidate +63, Jump +41, Knowledge (arcana) +51, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +44, Knowledge (religion) +65, Listen +65, Move Silently +30, Perform (acting) +34, Search +59, Sense Motive +68, Spellcraft +45, Spot +50, Survival +11 (+15 on other planes, +15 tracking), Tumble +35.

**Feats:** Cleave, Corrupt Spell-like Ability, Dark Speech, Graft Flesh, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Mortalbane, Multiattack, Persuasive, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*greater teleport*)

**Epic Feats:** Automatic Quicken Spell-like Ability (*greater teleport*), Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Epic Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Epic Will, Legendary Commander

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Solitary (unique), or team (3 pit fiends, 9 cornugons, and 27 erinyes)

**Challenge Rating:** 38

**Treasure:** *Amulet of the planes, Mark of the Dark Ministry, the Eight Rings* plus triple standard

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

The diabolical Furcas is one of the two remaining original members of the Dark Ministry. Initially a high ranking general within the Court of Dis, Furcas was among the first pit fiends selected by Asmodeus to join the Dark Ministry. Unlike most of his one-time fellows, the Minister of Mortal Relations never accepted invitations to join the Couriers of Perdition, claiming that his service defending Hell was unfinished. Additionally, unlike the few former Dark Ministry members who were “replaced,” Furcas’ millennia of observing and studying the art of betrayal have enabled him to eliminate every pit fiend poised to “retire” him from service.

As the Minister of Mortal Relations, Furcas uses his excessive knowledge of mortal (and immortal) ambition and pride to not only woo and corrupt powerful mortals, but immortals as well, steadily providing more fodder to feed the Legions of Hell. Furcas is perhaps the most unique of the Dark Ministry in that his duties overlap with the interests of His Infernal Grace, the Archduke Dispater, Lord of the Second, and Her Infernal Highness, Princess Glasya. Furcas uses his operatives in the Infernal Denomination of Mortal Relations to make arrangements with mortals to assist in the *Blood War* directly; whether through misdirection, corruption, or intrigue, Furcas sees to it that mortals aggravate the goals of Abyssal factions whether they know they are being used or not. In contrast, Dispater and Glasya utilize their diabolical forces for the purpose of damning more souls directly to Hell rather than to the *Blood War*. There is certainly a degree of overlap as Furcas was once in Dispater’s Court and likely relies on the good-will of his former master in getting his job done.

In Hell, Furcas is viewed as the most powerful of the Dark Ministers. Indeed, he is possibly the most powerful pit fiend in Hell, perhaps even surpassing Aesmadeva due to the flexibility of his powers. Still, a minority of

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highly placed pit fiends question Furcas' intellect due to his repeated refusals to join the Courts of Perdition. He has been offered opportunities from Bael, Warlord of the First, and Mephistopheles, Arch-Duke of the Eighth. The truth is, Furcas is all but ensured a seat in Dispater's Court, but he has some unfinished business regarding the soul of a powerful mortal currently subservient to the Dark Prince of the Abyss, Graz'zt. Once this contract is successfully closed, Furcas will reenter the Court of Dispater, this time as a Duke of Hell with title of Duke of Rhetoric, a role in which he already excels. There is little doubt that Furcas will be one of the most powerful Dukes of Hell upon joining the Courtiers, a fact of which Dispater is most pleased and the other Lords and Dukes somewhat concerned.

Among the Dark Ministry, Furcas works closely with Minister Zapan who heads Immortal Relations. Furcas largely seems beyond the intrigue that plagues the other Dark Ministers as he has served in the council longer than any save Baalzephon. His relationship with Baalzephon is oddly one of camaraderie. Although he has no idea why she has not been offered promotion, he suspects that whatever has kept her back (or alive, for that matter) has kept her from interfering with his plans. This and the fact that they have served as Dark Ministers since the beginning binds Furcas and Baalzephon somewhat closely. Furcas allows Baalzephon to take the lead in matters of policy among the Ministers, knowing that if he were to take a leadership role she would subtly acquiesce to his position. The others fear Furcas for his might and ambition; unlike other devils, they all know that should Furcas succeed in this last test for Dispater, that his station is assured and that any attempt on their parts to betray him would be well remembered. Indeed, Zapan hopes to see Furcas succeed as he plans on melding the two Ministries into one. Until that time, Furcas remains one of the most influential non-divine beings in the Cosmos; even lesser gods shudder when they hear that Furcas is out recruiting.

Furcas is a particularly tall, gaunt, shadowy pit fiend. His head is encircled with many horns, giving the impression of a large crown. He never touches, but hovers just above the ground. More often than not, Furcas appears as an aged, wise seer in simple red robes with a proud bearing. Whether in this form or his pit fiend form, Furcas' eyes glow a dull yellow.

### Combat

Furcas rarely allows matters to deteriorate into personal fisticuffs. With his Diplomacy skill, he can easily turn hostile creatures into friendly ones, and indifferent ones into fanatics. If attacked alone, Furcas will usually *greater teleport* or *plane shift* away, although he will make note of the mortals who dared to assault his person. However, Furcas is almost always accompanied with a multitude of bodyguards, followers, cultists and other allies. Furcas is often defended to the death by his allies.

When Furcas does deign to fight, he will typically *summon* a pair of pit fiends before casting a *mass hold monster*. He will then follow up with *blasphemy* if foes are close, or begin covering the field with corrupt *fireballs*. In combat, he uses his *greater teleport* ability to constantly change his position before launching his spell-like assault. Only when sorely pressed will Furcas engage in melee.

**Alternate Form (Su):** Furcas may take the form of any humanoid from Small to Large size as a standard

action.

**Blood Oath (Su):** Furcas' blood oath ritual has a Will save DC of 31 to resist the initial *enthral* effect, and a Will save DC 36 to resist the bond itself. Furcas may prepare a room for the ritual within 9 hours, and the ritual itself takes eighty-one minutes plus nine minutes per participant.

**Constrict (Ex):** Furcas deals 2d8 + 28 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Furcas' bite attack must succeed at a DC 38 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Fear Aura (Su):** Furcas can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 40 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 37<sup>th</sup>). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by his aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Fiend's Favor (Su):** Nine times per day, Furcas may grant a touched creature a +9 bonus to one of the creature's ability scores. This bonus stacks with any other bonuses the creature may have and lasts for one day. When the effect expires, the creature takes a -9 penalty to the same ability score for the next day. (This cannot reduce a creature's ability score to below 1). Another application of Furcas' favor negates the penalty and restores the bonus.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Furcas must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with his tail slap attack. If he gets a hold, he can constrict.

**Kill Cultist (Su):** As a standard action, Furcas may kill any creature who has sworn a blood oath to him. Distance is not a factor, but he must be on the same plane. A Fortitude save DC 31 is required to avoid death. Success causes the creature to take 3d6+9 points of damage. This is a death effect.

**Locate Cultist (Su):** Furcas can sense the location of any creature that has sworn a blood oath to him, as with the spell *locate creature*.

**Mind Shielding (Su):** Furcas is immune to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and any attempt to magically discern his alignment.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 38; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Furcas takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Scry on Cultist (Sp):** Furcas can scry on any creature that has sworn him a blood oath, as long as they are on the same plane as he. He can do this once per day per cultist.

**Soul Bargain (Su):** Furcas may establish binding agreements with willing mortals for their souls. Upon their death, the mortal's soul is immediately transferred into a gem prepared at the time of the bargain.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead*, *blasphemy*, *charm person*, *create undead*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good*, *major image*, *mass hold monster*, *power word stun*, *produce flame*, *polymorph*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *unholy aura*, *unhallow*, and *wall of fire*; 3/day – *major creation*, *meteor swarm* and *symbol of pain*; 1/day – *geas*, *mark of justice*, *wish* (others only), 1/month – *wish*. Caster level 37<sup>th</sup>, DC 22 + spell level.

**Spells:** Furcas may cast a small number of divine

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spells. He may prepare spells from the fiend of blasphemy class list, in addition to all spells from the Destruction, Domination, Evil, Knowledge, Law and Trickery domains. He possesses the domain powers of Knowledge and Trickery.

*Spells per day (1-9th):* 7/7/6/5/5/4/4/3/2; caster level 36<sup>th</sup>; DC 21+ spell level.

*Example spells prepared:* 1<sup>st</sup> – bane, command, detect chaos, detect secret doors, doom, protection from chaos, shield of faith; 2<sup>nd</sup> – darkness, detect thoughts, enthrall, hold person, shatter, silence, undetectable alignment; 3<sup>rd</sup> – bestow curse, clairaudience/clairvoyance, contagion, deeper darkness, magic circle against chaos, nondetection; 4<sup>th</sup> – death ward, discern lies, divination, sending, tongues; 5<sup>th</sup> – false vision, greater command, mass inflict light wounds, slay living, true seeing; 6<sup>th</sup> – find the path, harm, hold monster, mislead; 7<sup>th</sup> – dictum, disintegrate, legend lore, screen; 8<sup>th</sup> – discern location, earthquake, polymorph any object; 9<sup>th</sup> – implosion, time stop.

**Sponsor Worshiper (Su):** Furcas may sponsor clerics of up to 18<sup>th</sup> level, in his name. These clerics may choose from any of Asmodeus' domains.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Thrice per day, Furcas can automatically summon four lemures, osyluths, or hamatulas; or two erinyes, cornugons, gelugons, or pit fiends.

**Temptation (Su):** Furcas can offer good-aligned creatures the opportunity to change their alignment to evil. This functions identically to the temptation function of the *atonement* spell.

**Transfer Spell-like Ability (Sp):** Furcas can transfer the use of his spell-like abilities to those who have sworn him a blood oath. The caster level and DC remain unchanged. If he transfers the usage of an at will spell-like ability, his own usage of that ability is reduced to 9/day. Otherwise, he may transfer as many uses of a spell-like ability as he chooses, to as many cultists as he chooses. He may revoke this honor from any cultist at any time as a free action.

**Torture Cultist (Su):** As a standard action, Furcas may inflict pain on any creature who has sworn him a blood oath. Distance is not a factor, but he must be on the same plane. The affected creature takes a -9 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for 9 rounds. A successful Fortitude save (DC 31) reduces the penalty to -3.

**Possessions:** Furcas is pierced by multiple rings known as the *Infinity Rings* through the flesh of his shoulders. Each one of them carries powerful enchantments, and as a result, Furcas can make no use of normal wondrous items that require a body slot without first deactivating a ring. While others can use these rings, inserting the rings deal 5d6 points of damage each and requires a Fortitude save (DC 40) against death. No magical protection may be used to heal the wounds, bolster the Fortitude save, or avoid death else the rings fail to function. All eight rings must be inserted for any one to function.

**Adamantine:** Weapons striking Furcas must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or shatter.

**Brass:** 9/day, Furcas may call an efreet with up to 18 class levels to serve him for an hour.

**Bronze:** Furcas receives a +9 deflection bonus to his armor class.

**Copper:** Dealing damage to Furcas releases a *mindfog* (DC 28) in the area, within a 20 foot radius. Creatures who need to breathe must hold their breath or make For-

titude saves against suffocation.

**Golden:** Creatures targeted by any of Furcas' special attacks must roll two saves. If either fails, the saving throw is considered a failure.

**Iron:** Furcas' powers as a fiend of blasphemy and a fiend of corruption are enhanced to the levels described above.

**Lead:** Those who penetrate Furcas' spell resistance are subjected to his fear aura, disease, or poison (determined randomly) and must save against it.

**Silver:** Furcas is allowed a saving throw every round that he is under magical charm or compulsion.

**Cohort:** Furcas is often attended by his chief aide and pupil, a 6<sup>th</sup> circle lieutenant named Alasta the Keen (10 HD erinyes, fiend of blasphemy 6/fiend of corruption 6/ fiend of possession 6/mindbender 10). Alasta serves as the Chief Administrator the Denomination's training facility, the City of Man, in Minauros.

## Pearza, Chief of Research Dark Ministry of Hell

**Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**

**Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Seal:** An open book with red, scalloped pages, on a black inverted triangle

**Wizard 5/Maester 5/Loremaster 10**

**Hit Dice:** 28d8 + 20d4 + 384 (560 hp)

**Initiative:** +12

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 50 (-1 size, +10 armor, +8 Dexterity, +23 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 42

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +38/+55

**Attack:** *Malphas' Favor* +54 melee (1d8+23 plus 1d4 Str and Con (DC 27 negates))

**Full Attack:** *Malphas' Favor* +54/+49/+44/+39 melee (1d8+23 plus 1d4 Str and Con (DC 27 negates)) and 2 wings +48 melee (3d6+6) and bite +48 melee (4d6+6 plus poison and disease) and tail slap +48 melee (2d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, fear aura, improved grab, spells, spell-like abilities, *summon devils*

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 20/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., familiar, immunity to fire and poison, lore, quick crafting, regeneration 7, resistance to acid 15 and cold 15, see in darkness, spell resistance 47, telepathy 200 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +44, Ref +42, Will +46

**Abilities:** Str 37, Dex 27, Con 27, Int 39, Wis 27, Cha 27

**Skills:** Appraise (alchemical components) +32, Appraise (metal work) +23, Appraise (poisons) +25, Bluff +35, Climb +34, Concentration +51, Craft (alchemy) +55, Craft (blacksmith) +33, Craft (poisonmaking) +44, Decipher Script +39, Diplomacy +20, Disable Device +41, Disguise +29 (+33 acting), Gather Information +35, Handle Animal +14, Heal +28, Hide +25, Intimidate +45, Jump +17, Knowledge (arcana) +63, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +48, Knowledge (nature) +33, Knowledge (the planes) +55, Knowledge (religion) +47, Listen +31, Move Silently +31, Perform (oratory) +12, Ride +10, Search +40 (+44 for secret doors), Spellcraft +69 (+73 to decipher scrolls), Spot +39, Survival +8 (+10 above ground, +12 on other planes, +12 tracking),

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Use Magical Device +46 (+56 scrolls)

**Feats:** Brew Potion\*, Craft Magic Arms and Armor\*, Craft Rod\*, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Familiar, Investigator, Iron Will, Leadership, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll\*, Skill Focus (Knowledge: arcana), Violate Spell

**Epic Feats:** Craft Epic Wondrous Item, Efficient Item Creation (Wondrous Items), Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Solitary (unique), or troupe (3 pit fiends, 9 gelugons, 27 kocrachons)

**Challenge Rating:** 35

**Treasure:** Possessions plus triple standard

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

There is a saying common to proponents of Order: There is an answer to all things. This is an axiom in which Pearza, the Chief of Research and Implementation, firmly believes. To Pearza, there are no secrets and there are no mysteries. Knowledge is always waiting to be uncovered. Whether that knowledge can be discerned by careful reading, regular observation of cause and effect, constant experimentation, or by drilling a hole into a mortal's head with an ice-pick, information can be acquired.

Of all the members of the Dark Ministry, Pearza is the least known and, in meetings, only Corin is more silent. Pearza is interested in uncovering mysteries and in revealing the truths that will ensure victory to the Nine Hells, and she does not perceive time spent in the meetings with her peers or interacting with lesser beings elsewhere in the Cosmos as conducive to her goals. Pearza, instead, finds solace and success researching and developing new methods to make devils stronger, faster, harder, and better prepared than every other being in existence. Of all the Dark Ministry, she is the most introspective and intuitive, capable of making tremendous leaps of logic that result in fantastic discoveries that have had a profound impact on the diabolical side of the *Blood War*. In addition to researching new forms of magic and technology that benefit the *Blood War*, Pearza also oversees the interrogation of non-combatant enemies. Those across the Realities know that to be taken by Pearza is a fate worse than permanent death. Pearza believes that every prisoner has more information than they ever share and that all prisoners require the proper motivation to divulge their knowledge. And, even after Pearza is satisfied with the material gained from her subjects, she is certain not to waste their value. These unfortunates are then used in vile experiments to test concepts and ideas Pearza and her subordinates have developed. Everything has value, even if others are incapable of recognizing it.

It is unknown how many "Pearzas" have served in the Dark Ministry. It is widely believed that Dispater, Belial, Beelzebub, and Mephistopheles have recruited earlier "Pearzas" frequently, valuing the knowledge they have uncovered. It is also believed that a number of "Pearzas" have been retired early, becoming test subjects of their immediate subordinates. The current Pearza has served for just over three centuries and rose through the ranks of the last three "Pearzas" during the past 300 centuries. This particular Pearza is viewed with scorn among the rest of the Ministry since it is clear that she has no interest in the *Blood War* in and of itself and sim-

ply uses the *War* as an excuse to carry on experiments for her own benefit. Whether the current Pearza is aware of the attitude her peers have for her is unknown, but her degree of individuality may well lead to her "retirement" if she is not cautious.

Pearza appears as a normal pit fiend, although somewhat of a smaller, disheveled frame. Compared to the burning eyes of other pit fiends, Pearza's eyes seem dim and unsettled except when she becomes excited by some new revelation.

### Combat

Pearza will immediately *teleport* from any threat unless she is in one of her many laboratories at which time she will fight viciously to save her experiments. In such situations, Pearza will cast *unholy aura* on her person and then proceed to either use *blasphemy* to banish foes from Hell or use her spells to weaken adversaries so that her servants can rip them to shreds as quickly as possible. On in extreme cases or if she is cornered beyond one of her laboratories will Pearza use dangerous area of effect spells like *fireball* or *meteor swarm*.

**Constrict (Ex):** Pearza deals 2d8 + 26 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Pearza's bite attack must succeed at a DC 32 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Fear Aura (Su):** Pearza can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 32 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 28<sup>th</sup>). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by her aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Pearza must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with her tail slap attack. If she gets a hold, she can constrict.

**Lore (Ex):** Pearza has a +24 bonus on lore checks. She can discover the magical properties of an item as with the *identify* spell. Once per day, she may make use of her lore to duplicate the effects of either *analyze dweomer* or *legend lore*.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 32; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Quick Crafting:** Pearza can create magic items more quickly. She takes one day per two thousand gold pieces of value to create most magical items, and one day per twenty thousand gold pieces of value for wondrous items.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Pearza takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Secrets:** Pearza has learned the following secrets: applicable knowledge, newfound arcana, more newfound arcana, secrets of inner strength and the lore of true stamina.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead*, *blasphemy*, *charm person*, *create undead*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good*, *major image*, *mass hold monster*, *power word stun*, *produce flame*, *polymorph*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *unholy aura*, *unhallow*, and *wall of fire*; 1/day – *meteor swarm* and *symbol of pain*; 1/year – *wish*. Caster level 28<sup>th</sup>, DC 18 + spell level. Pearza has a +4 enhancement bonus on caster checks to penetrate spell resistance.

**Spells:** Wizard spells per day: 4/13/12/11/11/10/10/8/8. Caster level 40<sup>th</sup>; DC 24 + spell level. As a member of the Dark Ministry, Pearza has incredible access to magical knowledge. Her spell-books contain all of the spells found in the *Player's Handbook*, *Book of Vile Darkness*, and the *Spell Compendium*. Pearza has a +4 enhancement bonus on checks to penetrate spell resistance.

*Example Spells prepared:* 0 – *arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *erase*, *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *identify*, *magic aura*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *shield*, *silent image*, *sleep*, *true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *blindness/deafness*, *blur*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *locate object*, *magic mouth*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *obscure object*, *protection from arrows*, *shatter*, *whispering wind*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *blink*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *displacement*, *gaseous form*, *illusory script*, *lightning bolt*, *major image*, *nondetection*, *slow*, *suggestion*, *tongues*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *arcane eye*, *bless curse*, *charm monster*, *detect scrying*, *dimension door*, *dimensional anchor*, *enervation*, *fireball* (violated), *locate creature*, *scrying*, *solid fog*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *break enchantment*, *contact other plane*, *dominate person*, *fake vision*, *feeblemind*, *hold monster*, *mind fog*, *passwall*, *prying eyes*, *telekinesis*, *telepathic bond*; 6<sup>th</sup> – *analyze dweomer*, *antimagic field*, *eyebite*, *globe of invulnerability*, *legend lore*, *mislead*, *permanent image*, *programmed image*, *true seeing*, *veil*; 7<sup>th</sup> – *banishment*, *disintegrate* (violated), *ethereal jaunt*, *forcecage*, *greater scrying*, *project image*, *reverse gravity*, *spell turning*, *teleport object*, *vision*; 8<sup>th</sup> – *dimensional lock*, *discern location*, *greater planar binding*, *greater prying eyes*, *horrid wailing*, *maze*, *mind blank*, *moment of prescience*; 9<sup>th</sup> – *dominate monster*, *ethereallness*, *foresight*, *mass hold monster*, *power word kill*, *shapechange*, *soul bind*, *time stop*.

*Permanent spells:* Pearza has the following spells cast upon her in conjunction with *permanency*. *Arcane sight*, *comprehend languages*, *read magic*, and *see invisibility*.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Twice per day, Pearza can automatically summon three lemures, osyluths, or hamatulas, two erinyes, cornugons, or gelugons, or one pit fiend.

**Possessions:** Pearza does not often carry many magical items, although she is quite fond of a staff given to her by Duke Malphas. *Malphas' Favor* functions as a +4 *unholy quarterstaff* that also deals ability damage as a *rod of withering* (DC 27). It holds 81 charges which renew weekly. The staff allows the casting of the following spells.

- Commune (with Malphas only, no charge)
- Explosive Runes (no charge)
- Black tentacles (1 charge)
- Greater glyph of warding (1 charge)
- Malphas' private sanctum (1 charge)
- Wall of iron (1 charge)
- Disintegrate (3 charges)
- Destruction (3 charges)
- Malphas' lucubration (3 charges)
- Limited wish (9 charges)

Pearza wears a supreme ring of wizardry that doubles all of her spells from 1st through 9th level. She also wears an *epic black robe of the archmagi* sewn from elven flesh, but of double normal strength and powers.

**Cohorts:** Pearza employs her command sergeant major Vulcas (20HD hierragon, wizard 13) as quality control. He oversees most of the actual production line as the Minister is frequently occupied with her own pro-

jects. Her familiar, a clever imp named Kappa, often attends her.

## Zaebos, Minister of Promotion Dark Ministry of Hell

**Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**

**Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Seal:** A stylized, inverted red mountain tipped with a star on a black, inverted triangle

**Telepath 18/Mind Spy 9**

**Hit Dice:** 22d8 + 18d4 + 9d6 + 441 (616 hp)

**Initiative:** +16

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 45 (-1 size, +5 deflection, +8 Dexterity, +23 natural), touch 22, flat-footed 45

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +36/+53

**Attack:** Claw +48 melee (2d8+13)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +48 melee (2d8+13) and 2 wings +46 melee (3d6+6), and bite +46 melee (4d6+6 plus poison and disease), and tail slap +46 melee (2d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Anticipate, constrict, fear aura, improved grab, psionics, spell-like abilities, *summon devils*

**Special Qualities:** Combat telepathy, damage reduction 15/good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, instant mindscan, multiple surface thoughts, resistance to acid 15 and cold 15, regeneration 6, see in darkness, spell resistance 47, spherical read thoughts, telepathy 100 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +42, Ref +41, Will +46

**Abilities:** Str 37, Dex 27, Con 28, Int 33, Wis 33, Cha 28

**Skills:** Appraise +46, Autohypnosis +40, Balance +12, Bluff +65, Concentration +56, Diplomacy +58, Disguise +34 (+40 acting), Gather Information +63, Intimidate +54, Hide +24, Jump +21, Knowledge (arcana) +36, Knowledge (history) +36, Knowledge (local) +36, Knowledge (psionics) +53, Listen +41, Move Silently +28, Perform (oratory) +23, Psicraft +58, Search +31, Sense Motive +63, Spellcraft +40, Spot +56, Survival +11, Tumble +50

**Feats:** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Enlarge Power, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Mobility, Multiattack, Overchannel, Power Attack, Psionic Dodge, Psionic Fist, Psionic Meditation, Spring Attack, Unavoidable Strike, Widen Power

**Epic Feats:** Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Superior Initiative

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Solitary (unique), or troupe (9 pit fiends, 27 gelugons)

**Challenge Rating:** 35

**Treasure:** Possessions plus triple standard

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

Zaebos, the Minister of Promotions, is quite probably the single most hated member of the Dark Ministry. As the final determining factor for promotions within the Legions of Hell, even the other Dark Ministers detest him for they must all receive his approval in order for their favorites to receive the necessary recommendations for promotion. Zaebos, perhaps the only Minister to have anything bordering on integrity, is meticulous and purposeful in his decision; he sees to it that every single

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recommendation for promotion is not just for the benefit of the promotee and his place in the Legions, but for the benefit of Hell. If there is a single mar, a single question or doubt, Zaebos does not hesitate to place a black mark on the Ledger of Success.

Unsurprisingly, there have been many “Zaeboes” within the Ministry. Of all the Ministry stations, this is probably the only one in which none have been offered a place in the Courtiers of Perdition as most “Zaeboes” have disappeared entirely. The current Zaebos has served for about a millennium now and seems to have succeeded where his predecessors failed. While he is very particular about those whom he agrees to promote, he recognizes that for every promotion he allows that he can expect something in return. Zaebos has learned how to walk this thin line well, balancing the needs of his fellow Ministers with his own attitudes and the goals of Hell. So far, he has yet to make any enemies among his peers. About 300 years ago, in order to better facilitate the manner in which promotions are handled, Zaebos temporarily granted each Denomination the right to promote all devils from lemure to hamatula rank without his Denomination’s involvement. This test is designed to see if better productivity results from the individual Denominations have greater responsibility for their own actions. Thus far, the decision seems to have worked. In return, Zaebos now has much greater investment in the promotions of pit fiends throughout the Legions of Hell. Zimimar suspects that Zaebos hopes to eventually overthrow the other Dark Ministers since all pit fiends that have been promoted in the past 300 years owe their newfound stations to Zaebos. Zimimar has only informed Furcas of her suspicions; however, since the promotions have all resulted in some of the best pit fiends in over 6000 years, Furcas has decided not to confront Zaebos yet, instead deigning to allow Zimimar to collect as much information on the promoted pit fiends for future blackmail as necessary. Interestingly, Zaebos counts Zimimar as his best ally among the Ministers.

What Zimimar has yet to determine is that most of the “Zaeboes” have been *mind seed* implants of the original. The original Zaebos (now known as Baron Vhison) was clearly the most talented of the first six or so that served in the Ministry and his talents won him an offer to join the Courtiers of Perdition as a baron of Maladomini. Due to his overwhelming need to maintain control over all things of interest to him, the original Zaebos could not help but keep tabs on the Dark Ministry after his promotion. Disgusted with the numerous retirements and horrible failures that occurred since his departure, the Baron Vhison tracked down the most talented pit fiend reporting to the then Minister of Promotions and infected him with a *mind seed*. In short order and with no assistance from the other Dark Ministers, the subordinate retired the “Zaebos” and promptly replaced him. While Baalzephon, Furcas, and Zimimar were all individually suspicious of the new Zaebos, noticing some startling reminders from the past, they never discussed it among themselves and simply watched. In short order, the new Zaebos proved himself and the suspicions – although not gone – were ignored in favor of productivity. Every so often, Baron Vhison sprinkled *mind seeds* to promising pit fiends in the Denomination, ensuring that if the current Zaebos was retired or promoted, an appropriate replacement would eventually rise through the ranks. The current Zaebos is the most recent beneficiary of a *mind seed*. Although he is not truly

interested in taking over the Ministry, he is convinced that only he knows how to build a productive line of high-ranking officers. So far, he has managed to fill his Denomination with *mind seed* copies of himself; he is also slowly beginning to place non-seeded favorites in the upper echelons. Baron Vhison only occasionally looks into his old Denomination at this point and has no direct ties to the current Minister of Promotions; knowing he would be in enough trouble if his manipulations with the non-political Legions were discovered, he sees no reason to make himself even more culpable.

Zaebos is tall pit fiend with pristine scales and smoldering, red eyes. He tends to wear leather doublets, a skullcap, a cloak, and a ring on each finger. He speaks carefully and with a great deal of articulation, using the right words to express his approval or disdain; in the case of the latter, demotions are almost always around the corner.

## Combat

Zaebos is a shrewd, somewhat arrogant combatant, unafraid to face up against any foe. He normally begins combat by activating temporal acceleration, and using the “time-out-of-time” to buff and prepare fully for combat. Usual preparations include *inertial armor*, *defensive precognition* and *ubiquitous vision*, all augmented as he deems necessary. Spell-like abilities such as *magic circle against good* and *unholy aura* are also activated if facing a good aligned party.

Zaebos will only keep out of melee range as he continues to prepare if he finds that his ability to second-guess opponents is not enough to keep him unharmed (and, even then, he often resorts to activating an augmented *mental barrier* as an immediate action). Likewise, energy attacks that he is not immune to and that he deemed threatening will be countered by *energy adaptation*. Before launching physical attacks, he will typically manifest *offensive precognition* and *offensive prescience*. His last move before truly beginning to fight is normally to cloak himself in *greater invisibility*.

The Minister of Promotion loves to toy with his foes for a season before going on the offensive. He is extremely intelligent, though, and will not play with powerful enemies that could get an advantage on him in this time.

When he does finally go on the offensive he holds nothing back. He will normally unleash his *meteor swarm* spell-like ability into the center of a group, trying to cause as much damage as possible. He will then instantly begin to attack spellcasters or psions with *crisis of breath* augmented as needed and *mindwipe* likewise augmented to reduce their effectiveness. As he takes damage, he will use hostile empathic transfer to heal his wounds and cause injury to enemies, targeting weaker enemies first.

After unleashing his power allotment as his chosen target, Zaebos will move in close to engage in hand-to-hand combat, making a full attack. The order he will attack enemies is psions, spellcasters, and then warriors. After an attack he will use *greater teleport* to retreat an appropriate distance and begin to attack again.

If any of his boosting powers expire, Zaebos will again activate *temporal acceleration* to restore them.

**Anticipate (Su):** Zaebos gains a +9 insight bonus to attacks made against any foes whose thoughts he is reading, and a +9 insight bonus to AC against attacks made by those foes.

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**Combat Telepathy (Su):** Zaebos can maintain concentration on his *read thoughts* power as a free action with a successful concentration check (DC 10+damage taken on the previous round). If he uses another power or spell like ability, his *read thoughts* ends.

**Constrict (Ex):** Zaebos deals  $2d8 + 26$  points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Zaebos' bite attack must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Fear Aura (Su):** Zaebos can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 32 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 22<sup>nd</sup>). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by his aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Zaebos must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with his tail slap attack. If he gets a hold, he can constrict.

**Instant Mindscan:** Zaebos immediately gains all the knowledge from *read thoughts* on the first round.

**Multiple Surface Thoughts:** Zaebos can read the thoughts of up to eight creatures at once.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 30; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Psionics:** 279 PP. Manifester level 39<sup>th</sup>; DC 21 + power level. Powers known: 1 - *defensive precognition, initial armor, offensive precognition, offensive prescience, vigor*; 2 - *biofeedback, cloud mind, detect hostile intent, ego whip, read thoughts*; 3 - *crisis of breath, hostile empathic transfer, mental barrier, touchsight, ubiquitous vision*; 4 - *correspond, detect remote viewing, divination, energy adaptation, mindwipe*; 5 - *psychic crush, mindprobe, true seeing, tower of iron will*; 6 - *remote view trap, temporal acceleration*; 7 - *divert teleport, energy conversion, evade burst*; 8 - *mind blank, mind seed\**; 9 - *affinity field, reality revision*

\*Zaebos targets outsiders with the devil subtype instead of humanoids of Medium or smaller size with this power.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Zaebos takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Spell-like Abilities (Sp):** At will - *animate dead, blasphemy, charm person, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, greater dispel magic, greater invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good, major image, mass hold monster, power word stun, produce flame, polymorph, pyrotechnics, suggestion, unholy aura, unhallow, and wall of fire*; 1/day - *meteor swarm and symbol of pain*; 1/year-wish. Caster level 22<sup>nd</sup>; DC 18 + spell level

**Spherical Read Thoughts:** Zaebos may use *read thoughts* in a 60 foot sphere shaped area rather than a cone.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Twice per day, Zaebos can automatically summon two lemures, osyluths, or haamatulas, or one erinyes, cornugon, gelugon, or pit fiend.

**Possessions:** Zaebos wears a skull cap that is in actuality a powerful cognizance crystal known as the *Assessor*. It holds 90 power points but these renew themselves every hour without the need to recharge it from an outside source. It also translates telepathic sensations into a heightened awareness. Any creature within range of Zaebos' telepathy (usually 100 feet) suffer a -9 penalty to all attack rolls against him; he cannot be flanked or

caught flat footed by such creatures. This special power is canceled by *mind blank* or similar effects.

Zaebos also wears a *cloak of resistance* +7, fastened at the throat by a *greater torc of power preservation* (reduces the cost of all powers manifested by 3 power points; minimum 0). A *ring of protection* +5 crafted of adamantine adorns the middle finger of his left hand. On his right is a cold iron band that turns the damage he deals with his claws into stored power points. The ring can hold up to 27 power points. Zaebos cannot manifest powers from the ring, but he can draw from the points within to replenish his own as a standard action.

**Cohort:** The mechanical Tyrpain (16 HD gelugon, cerbremancer 10/psion 3/diviner 3) is Zaebos' Inspector General and receives all reports from the branch general.

## Zapan Minister of Immortal Diplomacy Dark Ministry of Hell

**Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**

**Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Seal:** Fiendish hand clutching at three stylized stars over a black inverted triangle

**Cleric 1/Divine Emissary 10/High Proselytizer 9**

**Hit Dice:** 36d8 + 10d10 + 368 (585 hp)

**Initiative:** +8

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 53 (-1 size, +8 armor, +5 deflection, +8 Dexterity, +23 natural) touch 22, flat-footed 45

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +36/+53

**Attack:** *The Infernal Ambassador* +54 melee (2d6+17)

**Full Attack:** *The Infernal Ambassador* +54/+49/+44/+39 melee (2d6+17) and claw +44 melee (2d8+6) and 2 wings +44 melee (3d6+6) and bite +44 melee (4d6+6 plus poison and disease) and tail slap +44 melee (2d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, divine hand, fear aura, improved grab, proselytize, rebuke undead, smite, spell-like abilities, spells, *summon devils*

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 15/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., emissary's favor, immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 15 and cold 15, regeneration 6, see in darkness, spell resistance 46, telepathy 200 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +33, Ref +33, Will +39

**Abilities:** Str 37, Dex 27, Con 27, Int 31, Wis 35, Cha 32

**Skills:** Balance +10, Bluff +58, Climb +34, Concentration +55, Diplomacy +70, Disguise +43 (+47 when acting in character), Gather Information +32, Heal +37, Hide +35, Intimidate +57, Jump +36, Knowledge (arcana) +50, Knowledge (nature) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +57, Knowledge (religion) +55, Listen +41, Move Silently +29, Perform (oratory) +29, Search +37, Sense Motive +54, Spellcraft +64, Spot +40, Survival +12 (+16 on other planes), Tumble +31.

**Feats:** Dark Speech, Divine Metamagic (Maximize Spell), Divine Metamagic (Quicken Spell), Divine Metamagic (Widen Spell), Divine Might, Divine Vigor, Domain Spontaneity (Trickery), Iron Will, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Multiattack, Negotiator, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Weapon Focus (heavy mace), Widen Spell

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**Epic Feats:** Bonus Domain (Evil), Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Great Smiting

**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition

**Organization:** Solitary (unique), or troupe (9 pit fiends, 18 fallen planetars, 27 fallen astral devas)

**Challenge Rating:** 34

**Treasure:** *Hell's Vest, Mark of the Dark Ministry, Seal of the Ministry* and other possessions

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

The Minister of Immortal Diplomacy is one of the best known devils in the Cosmos, as well as one of the few that most are willing to knowingly deal with. Zapan is perceived as relatively honest, trustworthy, and sincere in his diplomatic efforts – at least for a devil. Even angels are taken aback when they treat with him, finding him to be charming and courteous without the underlying slime exuded by most pit fiends. Zapan's behavior has won him and the Legions of Hell many powerful alliances and treaties in *The Blood War*, many from the most unlikely sources. Minister Zapan is considered one of the best deal-makers in Creation. In the not too distant future, he fully hopes to be one of the most powerful fiends in existence.

Zapan is a crafty manipulator, taking the time to learn the desires, goals, and needs of the beings and groups with whom his Ministry interacts. Through Zapan's Ministry, all non-divine immortal contacts are initiated and maintained, and he regulates the mercenary dealings with the daemons. He sees to it that information on demonic incursions on other planar locations are leaked out to angelic forces on a quid pro quo basis, and he sees to it that diabolical interference is reduced in certain areas. Of course, he never promises that diabolical acts of evil will end, nor does he always provide 100% accurate information; Zapan gives just enough to make it appear that he is being helpful and by the time his "allies" begin to suspect that they have been duped, he already has more information on another threat and more deals on the way. Zapan is aware of the treachery of the daemons and he, along with the rest of the Dark Ministry, already has plans on how to deal with them in the future. Zapan also deals with demons. His most steadfast contact within The Abyss is from a tiefling named Rule-of-Three, a servant of the Demon Prince Graz'zt. Zapan is cautious in such engagements, knowing the god-like intellect of Graz'zt, but to date he has found the means to get a great deal out of his Abyssal contacts.

Zapan is rising as a powerful force within the Dark Ministry. It is unclear how long this particular Zapan has served within the Ministry. Furthermore, it is also unknown that his position is the one most likely to be scrutinized by Asmodeus himself. The current "Zapan" is suspected to be the second Minister of that name since the Dark Ministry was instituted and many out of Hell believe that due to his numerous successes across the Cosmos and the clear support he receives from The Overlord of Hell, Zapan will soon be in a position to dominate the Ministry. Zapan eagerly supports Furcas, believing that once the Minister of Mortal Relations is promoted into the Courtiers, he will be able to consolidate the Ministry of Mortal Relations into the Ministry of Immortal Diplomacy. It is unclear if the other Dark Ministers are aware of Zapan's plans, but it is likely that they would all stand opposed to his increased power. Along with Furcas, Zapan works closely with Corin the Spy-

master, using his information as the basis upon which to determine what kinds of alliances and concessions to offer. Zapan turns to Marshal Dagos after he establishes new treaties. In Hell, Zapan is the Minister that the Courtiers and the Lords of the Nine seek out when they need to get involved in the *Blood War*.

Zapan usually appears as a tall, slender bald human male, with a red mustache and goatee, and black irises and red pupils. Zapan wears expensive courtier's clothes, likewise colored black and red. His true form is that of a pit fiend the color of burning ash, his tremendous wings perpetually covering his body as he hovers just off the ground. In either form, Zapan speaks in a deep, purring voice.

### Combat

Zapan deplores violence and, as he usually has a full complement of devils with him, tends to let his guards do the fighting. If forced into a situation that requires combat, Zapan will usually cast a variety of boons, from *bless* to *aid*, followed up with *unholy aura* on himself and, if possible, his allies. Then, he will single out the most annoying adversary and center a *meteor swarm* on her. He will continue with *fireballs*, although he will cast *greater dispel magic* as needed to eliminate and reduce enemy defenses. If foes engage him in melee, he unleashes smite attacks on them at once. If pressed, Zapan has no problem retreating immediately, although he will use all his resources to punish his enemies in the future.

**Constrict (Ex):** Zapan deals 2d8 + 26 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Divine Hand (Su):** As a free action once per day, Zapan can gain a +20 profane bonus to a single attack roll with a heavy mace.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Zapan's bite attack must succeed at a DC 31 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Emissary's Favor (Sp):** Zapan may call upon Asmodeus' personal blessing to produce any of the following effects.

*Divine Inspiration:* Zapan gains a +2 luck bonus on his attack and damage rolls for 10 rounds. He may call on this favor four times a day.

*Greater Planar Ally:* Zapan may call forth a planar ally as the spell, with a caster level of 46<sup>th</sup>. This servant does not request any return favors. Zapan may call on this favor once per day.

**Fear Aura (Su):** Zapan can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 33 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 26<sup>th</sup>). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by his aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Zapan must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with his tail slap attack. If he gets a hold, he can constrict.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 31; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Proselytize (Sp):** Three times per day, Zapan may make use of his *proselytize* ability. The Will save to resist enrapture or violate the *sanctuary* effect is 36. The speech affects all those within 550 feet of Zapan and those affected are enraptured for 55 minutes. Enraptured beings temporarily change their alignment to Lawful Evil and perceive Zapan's words as if under the effects of

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*charm monster.* Lawful Evil creatures get no save if they have 9HD or less; followers of Asmodeus get no save if they have 18HD or less.

**Deific Aura:** At any point in his speech, Zapan may allow the power of Hell to surge forth from his body. This functions as both a *dictum* and *blasphemy* spell (Caster level 20<sup>th</sup>) that only affects those not enraptured within range of Zapan's sermon. Zapan may use this ability a total of three times per day.

**Deific Face:** At any point in his speech, Zapan may allow the flames of Hell to blast forth from his face, consuming those not enraptured. This deals 3d6 points of damage to everyone within range of his speech and blinds those who fail a Reflex save (DC 36). Creatures with the Good or Chaotic subtypes take 25d6 points of damage. Zapan may use this ability a total of nine times per day.

**Deific Word:** At any point in his speech, Zapan may infuse his words with literal power, dealing 3d8 points of sonic damage to everyone within range of the speech not enraptured. Those so struck must make a Will save (DC 36) or be stunned for 3 rounds. Zapan may use this ability a total of nine times per day.

**Divine Touch:** Throughout his speech, Zapan may move through the audience touching those enraptured. This touch heals 1d4 points of damage and removes any natural disease or poison from their bodies. He may touch six people per round, and an individual can benefit from the touch only once per session. Zapan may use this ability throughout the entire duration of any of his sermons.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 14/day, Zapan may rebuke or bolster undead. He rebukes undead as a 1<sup>st</sup> level cleric and gains a +6 profane bonus on his rebuke checks.

He may also expend a single use (unless otherwise noted) of this power to accomplish one of several effects.

**Divine Metamagic:** Zapan may expend four rebuke attempts to add Widen or Maximize or five attempts to add the Quicken metamagic to any of his spells without increasing the casting cost.

**Divine Vigor:** Increase his base speed by 10 feet and gain 92 temporary hit points for eleven minutes.

**Domain Spontaneity:** Spontaneously cast a spell from the Trickery domain

**Smite (Su):** 5/day, Zapan can make a smite attack against any foe. He gains a +4 bonus to his attack roll and deals 22 additional points of damage.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead, blasphemy, charm person, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, greater dispel magic, greater invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good, major image, mass hold monster, power word stun, produce flame, polymorph, pyrotechnics, suggestion, unholy aura, unhallow, and wall of fire;* 2/day – *heal;* 1/day – *meteor swarm and symbol of pain;* 1/month – *wish.* Caster level 26<sup>th</sup>; DC 21 + spell level

**Spells:** 6/8+1/8+1/8+1/7+1/6+1/5+1/4+1/3+1 Caster level 34<sup>th</sup>; DC 22 + spell level

**Cleric Spells prepared:** 0 – *create water, detect poison, inflict minor wounds, light, mending, resistance;* 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane, comprehend languages, disguise self\*, divine favor, doom, entropic shield, obscuring mist, remove fear, sanctuary;* 2<sup>nd</sup> – *calm emotions\*, death knell, eagle's splendor, enthrall, shatter, silence, sound burst, undetectable alignment, zone of truth;* 3<sup>rd</sup> – *bestow curse, contagion, cure serious wounds, deeper darkness, dispel*

*magic, invisibility purge, locate object, nondetection\*, speak with dead;* 4<sup>th</sup> – *cure critical wounds, death ward, dimensional anchor, discern lies, dismissal, restoration, tongues, unholy blight\*;* 5<sup>th</sup> – *dispel good, flame strike, mass inflict light wounds\*, plane shift, righteous might, slay living, true seeing;* 6<sup>th</sup> – *banishment, blade barrier, harm, heal, mislead\*, word of recall;* 7<sup>th</sup> – *destruction, dictum, disintegrate\*, ethereal jaunt, greater scrying;* 8<sup>th</sup> – *antimagic field, discern location, earthquake\*, greater spell immunity.*

**Domains:** Evil, Destruction, Law, Trickery. Zapan casts Evil and Law spells as an 35<sup>th</sup> level caster.

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Twice per day, Zapan can automatically summon three lemures, osyluths, or hamatulas, two erinyes, cornugons, or gelugons, or one pit fiend.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Zapan takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Possessions:** *The Infernal Ambassador* is a +5 angel bane heavy mace that also functions as a celestial bane rod. Any angel damaged by the rod must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or die.

*Hell's Vest* is a red and black courtier's doublet enchanted as *magic armor of darksoul protection.* It provides a +9 armor bonus in addition to the darksoul protection effect. There are three pockets hidden in the doublet that function as *bags of holding type IV.* Any being attempting to access the pockets without the devil subtype must make a Will save DC 28 or be *planeshifted* to Hell.

*The Seal of the Ministry* is a signet ring that allows Zapan to use his special proselytize abilities more often than normal as described above. Also, by making his seal on a written contract, he invokes a powerful binding ritual. Should either party violate the text of the contract, they suffer nine negative levels which cannot be restored until the bargain has been satisfied. The affronted party determines the conditions by which the bargain can be satisfied if none are stated within the contract itself. Subordinates of either party that violate the bargain enact the binding curse; both the subordinate and the signed party suffer the negative levels. When Zapan signs a contract, he speaks for the entire Ministry as a whole, so any violations perpetrated by the Ministry fall upon him to make restitution. Needless to say, violating a treaty of Zapan's is not a healthy decision for a devil to make. Nearly all contracts signed by him include the clause that a subordinate violator will be dealt a slow painful death as satisfaction.

Zapan also has numerous other wondrous items and magic rings that he wears on occasion, usually gifts from other immortal delegations. He possesses several *rings of elemental command* and *djinni rings* from the efreeti, a master ring with nine matching slave rings from the formian envoys, and a *darkskull* from Rule-of-Three. If on a mission to the corresponding area, he is almost sure to have the appropriate gift on his person. He may or may not be wearing these gifts if encountered elsewhere.

Zapan also frequently makes gifts to those he treats with, so his treasure may be significantly higher if on diplomatic mission.

**Cohort:** Pergrinial (20 HD fallen planetar, blackguard 4/paladin (fallen) 9) is one of Zapan's favored pupils despite her heritage and attends him on all his dealings with the Realms Above.

## Zimimar, Minister of Morale

### Dark Ministry of Hell

**Pit fiend (9<sup>th</sup> Circle General of the Legions of Hell)**  
**Large Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**  
**Seal:** Red, stylized, smiling fiend head on a black inverted triangle  
**Soul Eater 10**  
**Hit Dice:** 46d8+598 (805 hp)  
**Initiative:** +13  
**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)  
**AC:** 50 (-1 size, +5 deflection, +13 Dexterity, +23 natural), touch 27, flat-footed 37  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +41/+63  
**Attack:** Claw +59 melee (3d8+18 plus 1 Constitution and energy drain /19-20/x2)  
**Full Attack:** 2 claws +59 melee (3d8+18 plus 1 Constitution and energy drain /19-20/x2) and 2 wings +57 melee (2d6+9 and energy drain) and bite +57 melee (4d6+9 plus energy drain, poison and disease) and tail slap +56 melee (2d8+9 plus energy drain)  
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Constrict, energy drain, fear aura, improved grab, spell-like abilities, soul blast, soul slave, *summon devils*  
**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 20/epic, good and silver, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 20 and cold 20, regeneration 9, see in darkness, soul abilities, spell resistance 43, telepathy 300 ft.  
**Saves:** Fort +41, Ref +41, Will +38  
**Abilities:** Str 46, Dex 36, Con 36, Int 31, Wis 31, Cha 31  
**Skills:** Balance +18, Bluff +58, Climb +42, Concentration +63, Decipher Script +22, Diplomacy +23, Disguise +52 (+54 acting), Gather Information +37, Hide +51, Intimidate +80, Jump +44, Knowledge (arcana) +52, Knowledge (nature) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +52, Knowledge (religion) +52, Listen +62, Move Silently +65, Perform (act) +17, Search +64, Sense Motive +61, Spellcraft +66, Spot +62, Survival +13 (+17 on other planes, +19 tracking), Tumble +39  
**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Investigator, Iron Will, Leadership, Multiattack, Persuasive, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)  
**Epic Feats:** Epic Leadership, Epic Reputation, Epic Skill Focus (Intimidate)  
**Climate/Terrain:** Malsheem, Nessus, Ninth of the Nine Hells of Perdition  
**Organization:** Solitary (unique), or troupe (3 pit fiends, 9 osyluths and 27 kocrachons)  
**Challenge Rating:** 34  
**Treasure:** Possessions plus triple standard  
**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

Within the Legions of Hell, there are few beings more feared than Zimimar. To many outsiders, this is something of a surprise. Many people unfamiliar with devils and Hell would expect the Minister of Morale to be a guiding, clarifying force that promotes order and organization, adherence to a common cause, and ultimate loyalty. Indeed, Zimimar accomplishes all of these things. But what many outsiders do not comprehend is the manner in which she succeeds in her responsibilities. Zimimar uses torture to maintain morale, and if torture does

not work, she uses the permanent death feared by all outsiders.

As the Minister of Morale, it is Zimimar's responsibility to ensure that the Legions of Hell adhere to the will of the Nine Hells of Perdition and that they defend the side of tyranny in the eternal *Blood War* to the utmost of their abilities. Through her Denomination, Zimimar also weeds out subversives and traitors, torturing them until they reveal all they know. Any indication of dissatisfaction in the ranks brings Zimimar out and, due to the many spies she has scattered across the Legions, few ever voice opinions that do not fall in line with the will of Hell. Such is the power of Zimimar.

Zimimar's background is a muddled one. Many texts insist that Zimimar was once a pit fiend general within the Court of Minauros. However, this information is correct so far as the original Zimimar went. The first Zimimar was male and his style was more along the lines of what many mortals expect when they think about morale. But, the Zimimar that replaced the original was initially a personal servant of His Infernal Grace Belial, Archduke of Phlegethos and Lord of Pain and Sufferings. It was during her time in the Courts of Phlegethos that this pit fiend honed her singular skills as a torturer. Even Belial admired her touch and she would likely have been promoted to a Duke of Hell had the *Dies Irae* not occurred. Once the Days of Wrath were concluded and Asmodeus formed the Dark Ministry, the original Zimimar, believing that bribes and gold could ensure the morale of the Legions of Hell, was soon viewed with displeasure among the other Ministers. Although exactly what occurred has never been determined, something happened to the original Zimimar, and where there was once a male Minister of Morale there was suddenly a female. This female has served in this capacity ever since.

Zimimar uses torture not to gain information, but to ensure obedience and productivity. As such, she works closely with Dagos, the Marshal of the Pits, to maintain the Legions of Hell. She also finds it necessary to work with both Corin and Zaebos; with the former she uncovers internal spies and threats to the Legions, while with the latter she ensures that only the best devils are promoted. Among the Dark Ministry, Zimimar is both feared and respected; it is likely that a Courtier of Perdition will soon offer Zimimar a place as a Duke of Hell.

Zimimar often appears in a form similar to that of an attractive, if somewhat plump, human woman, although she bears the wings, "scales," horns, tail, cloven hoofs, and claws of a pit fiend. Her head is surrounded by a nimbus of flames that mimics human hair. A wide smile is frozen on her face, barring all of her large, sharp teeth. This perpetual grin is very disconcerting as there is no hint of pleasure or kindness in it. When devils believe that one of their number has done something to warrant punishment, they say "You've earned Zimimar's smile."

#### Combat

Zimimar detests physical confrontations as she has grown accustomed to having victims brought to her in chains so she can torture them. Still, her skills have not waned and she is still a formidable opponent.

When fighting mortals, Zimimar typically attempts to *charm* the strongest looking one. If this proves successful, she orders the *charmed* victim to defend her while she envelopes herself in an *unholy aura*. Then, Zimimar will call down a *meteor swarm* centered on any nearby

# Chapter Six: The Dark Ministry

spellcasters. If her enemies are still standing, she will cast *greater dispel magic* for two rounds before either casting *fireballs* or teleporting away for reinforcements.

**Constrict (Ex):** Zimimar deals  $2d8 + 26$  points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Disease (Su):** A creature struck by Zimimar's bite attack must succeed at a DC 44 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease called devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 points of Strength).

**Energy Drain (Su):** Zimimar bestows 2 negative levels on a target with a touch attack or successful attack with a natural weapon.

**Fear Aura (Su):** Zimimar can radiate a 20-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 41 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 36<sup>th</sup>). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by her aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Zimimar must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with her tail slap attack. If she gets a hold, she can constrict.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury; Fortitude DC 44; initial damage 1d8 Constitution, secondary damage death.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Zimimar takes normal damage from good-aligned silvered weapons, and from spells or effects with the good descriptor.

**Soul Abilities (Su):** When Zimimar uses her energy drain ability on a creature, she gains a +9 bonus to her Strength, Dexterity and Constitution scores for 24 hours. She gains a +3 enhancement bonus on saves, ability checks and skill checks for 24 hours. She gains a +3 bonus to the save DC of her spell-like and supernatural abilities as well as the ability to use them thrice as often (this does not apply to her *wish* spell-like ability). If she kills a creature with her energy drain, she may assume its appearance and abilities (as the *shapechange* spell) for 24 hours.

Because she is so often personally involved in the torture of creatures, these bonuses have been included in her statistic block above. Rare indeed is the day that has passed without Zimimar cutting deep into the very soul of a helpless victim.

**Soul Blast (Su):** Thrice per day, Zimimar may project a blast of soul searing force that deals  $10d6$  points of damage against a target. A Reflex save DC 33 negates the damage. Zimimar can only make use of this power on a day she has drained energy, which means she almost always has this ability available.

**Soul Slave (Su):** The bodies of those slain by Zimimar's energy drain are reanimated as wights under her control.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** At will – *animate dead*, *blasphemy*, *charm person*, *create undead*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds only), *magic circle against good*, *major image*, *mass hold monster*, *power word stun*, *produce flame*, *polymorph*, *pyrotechnics*, *suggestion*, *unholy aura*, *unhallow*, and *wall of fire*; 9/day – *meteor swarm* and *symbol of pain*; 1/month – *wish*. These abilities are as spells cast by a 36th level sorcerer (save DC 23 + spell level).

**Summon Devils (Sp):** Nine times per day, Zimimar can automatically summon four lemures, osyluths, or hamatulas; or two erinyes, cornugons, gelugons, or pit fiends.

**Possessions:** Zimimar wears little in the way of magical items, but she has had her claws enchanted with the

wounding enhancement, causing them to be even deadlier than they already are. She wears a *ring of protection* +5, but only out of habit rather than need. The Infernal Writ is a scroll that contains a contract between her and an unknown entity that has increased her soul eater powers to the extent described above. This item never leaves her possession.

**Cohort:** Zimimar is often in the company of her 'pet' Angstier (15 HD hellcat, ranger 18). This hellcat enjoys nothing more than hunting its favorite prey: devils.